CAMBIA CARTY

By William Buckley

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CAMBIA CARTY
AND OTHER STORIES

BY WILLIAM BUCKLEY
Author of "Croppies Lie Down"

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CAMBIA CARTY

CHAPTER I.

Most of my readers have heard about Youghal—that quaint little seaport of southern Ireland—in whose crowded ways and narrow alleys linger so many traces of another age; of days when the Desmonds swept through its streets in feudal state, or of the later time when Raleigh mused under his myrtle trees beneath the shadow of its wondrous old church. Though not lovely, like other Irish watering-places, it yet possesses a certain individuality which saves it from being vulgarised by the welcome, if motley, horde of pleasure-seekers who descend upon the town ere the first pinks have opened in the garden borders, and loiter on until the last red geraniums have ceased blazing on the window sills. One feels it has a stern past behind its new stucco, and was not called into existence by a flourish of bathers' towels or a caprice of fashion.

In the summer all things are beautiful, and Youghal is no exception. The slumberous waters of the great bay flash and sparkle in the sunlight, reflecting the luminous blue of a cloudless Irish sky. Tawny sand and lichen-stained rock blend their varying tints upon the low-lying shores that gradually recede in melting perspective to the low

green hills rolling away northward, and the line of "villas." extending from Clay Castle to the railway station gleam radiant in fresh paint, as if the sleeping, glittering devil outside had never thundered at the windows or spat down the chimneys into the hissing parlour fires. On such days the place looks its best, and is best viewed from the bay, where one may pass a pleasant hour on the gentle swell of the ocean, with few sounds to break the stillness save the babble of the people on the sands or the faint patter of English musketry from the rifle ranges opposite.

But towards the end of the season Youghal is more characteristic, when the aftermath of society camp followers fill the town, paying half price for the inconveniences to which their wealthier fellows had submitted a few months before. Then landladys become negligent, servants familiar, and the sea as if wearied of its good behaviour during the summer months, begins to grow restive under the whip of the wind from the south and the west

At such times the poor fishermen risk their lives daily, and, alas! lose them now and then, as they strive to snatch their children's bread from the teeth of the ravening waves.

It was thus "big Pat Carroll" lost his one stormy September afternoon, for the boat he and a few others jointly owned, being heavily laden with hake and the sea rough, Pat stood up in the stern, his shoulders squared to the wind, a veritable human sail, his companions rowing meanwhile; they made fair way until, just under the light-

house, a sudden squall caused him to lose his balance and, lurching forward, he went overboard without a cry, at the very moment that a huge billow, which had chased them all the way from Clay Castle, climbed into the boat. Of course, he left a wife and at least six children, with "another wan comin', plaze God," to bewail his fate, and look for support to Tim Carty, the net-maker, a relative in some infinitesimal degree, who inhabited a small dwelling—half cabin, half warehouse—close to the square, and at a short distance from the ferry by which one can cross to the Waterford side of the Blackwater.

Being at this especial juncture more busy than usual, and seeing that his business was likely to improve, Tim consented to take Annie Carroll's eight-year-old son as a kind of apprentice, while the other children were provided for one way or another until such time as Providence would obligingly open a way to the widow and the fatherless. With their subsequent fate I am not concerned. One or two died young, the others being dragged up somehow until they emigrated later on, under their poor mother's inept guardianship, to America, and possibly in time helped to fill the gaols or the Senate House of the great Republic. Little Pat, who was already promising "to take" after his father in height, however, remained at Tim's store in the capacity of general assistant, messenger, playmate, and sometimes nurse, to his employer's golden-haired little daughter, Cambia, whose mother was understood to have died shortly before Tim Carty—

a rover in his early days—had returned to settle down among his townsfolk.

Years passed, the trade prospered, for the work was honest, and it was well-known that there was no other maker—far or near—whose knots were firmer, or whose work stood the strain of a heavy haul better than his. The girl and boy, too, emulated the growth of the business, so that before long Pat, now a tall, ungainly, freckle-faced lad, was sent away to assist in developing a kind of branch house in Kinsale, where another relative, a fisherman, had offered him a share in a hooker as payment for help during the season. He left Youghal light-heartedly, expecting to return soon, but circumstances decreed that he should not see the little town again for many a long day; until, just at the busiest part of one year, he received an urgent summons to return thither—his mother had come back from America, poorer than when she set out, had come back dying, so that she might draw her last breath in "holy Ireland," and be "berrid" with the "old people" under the old sod! Poor fellow, he answered the message hot foot, was just able to give her the last farewell, and paid, with an indescribable thrill of melancholy pride, the burial expenses out of the first money he had ever touched. The funeral over, Pat, whose calling would not just then suffer absence, was obliged to hurry away, for the poor have little time to nurse a sorrow, even the most sacred—they must struggle or starve. Perhaps it is this makes them remember their dead longer than others.

Some weeks after Pat Carroll's departure, Youghal had a sensation in the sudden appearance of a stately, foreign-looking barque that was blown from her course by a violent Atlantic gale. She was damaged, and gladly beat in for the narrow harbour, where she sought shelter until the wind would abate and her shattered spars and torn canvas might be refitted.

Next day the whole town knew as much of the newcomers as they chose to tell—and a trifle more. The vessel was the "Ariane," owned by a French firm, officered by French seamen, and manned by a crew from the four quarters of the globe. They had tried at first to weather the storm, but the main-sail split in two, and the main-top-gallant went by the board, while the rigging itself was much injured, and the great ship's timbers strained so badly that they feared one time she would have foundered as she ran before the furious wind. The skipper had not left the wheel for twenty-four hours, and it was owing to his consummate seamanship alone that the "Ariane" lived through the awful time.

This, with much more to the same purpose, Tim Carty, who had an eye to business, learned at Jack Doolan's from a Breton belonging to the crew, and, accordingly, he took care, when the mate came ashore at noon, accompanied by a handsome Creole, with a dare-devil glance in her blazing eyes and a diabolical verve in her undulating movements, to welcome the strangers as they staggered up the uneven, slimy ferry slip, with a broken

word or two in the French he had picked up abroad during his salad days, when, if report spoke true, he married the foreign wife who died one year after their Cambia's birth. M. Florimel, a lively little Bordelais, met this advance enthusiastically, being only too glad to make the acquaintance of anyone who could partially understand his tongue and save him the agony of struggling through English as she is spoke by the average son of France. A seemingly unpremeditated remark elicited the fact that the vessel was in need, amongst other things, of cordage, and that he, M. Florimel, first mate, had been commissioned by Captain Jules Laforge to make inquiries for a reliable article. Tim Carty, on this, spake in artless praise of some fine home-spun rigging cord prepared under his own supervision, as he had lately acquired a rope-walk for the manufacture of his merchandise, and the conversation ended by all three going over at once to the warehouse.

Cambia was keeping shop at the moment of their arrival, and, hearing steps approaching, she lounged to the door. The wintry sunlight of the early Lenten weather smote her fair face, and brought out the rich golden tones of her yellow hair. The Creole, who had walked on before the men, contemptuously indifferent, halted suddenly, and, as her companions stopped near the door, said in slow English :—"Good morning, missee. Ah! if I had a skin like yours I would marry an emperor!"

"Wouldn't an honest man serve your turn,

ma'am?" rejoined Cambia, quietly, her calm glance measuring the other.

"François, regarde-dis-là!" continued the woman, addressing M. Florimel, with the air of a person who has discovered something noteworthy in an unexpected place; but François was already doing so on his own account, and when his eyes met Cambia's he lifted his cap. The Creole laughed. "Shall I tell your fortune?" she said, seating herself on a stone pillar, worn into grooves by the attrition of countless cables, while the men turned to inspect the various coils of rope piled around.

"I don't care," replied the girl, extending her strong, cool, shapely hand. "I suppose I am to marry a gentleman an' be a grand lady with a carriage an' four, my dear."

The other bent over the upturned palm, affecting to read the lines. "No," she replied, musingly. "I think not *ma chère,* but you will amuse yourself a leetle bit before you do marry, though no trouble will come of it; *your* heart will never run away with your head, but you may break an honest man's and spoil someone's sleep o'nights."

Cambia, smiling at this ambiguous pronouncement, withdrew the hand. "Wisha, more fools they," she observed indifferently, "what do people go to bed for but to sleep? It must be very nice livin' in a big ship like that one over," she went on, "an' sailin' all around the world."

The Creole laughed again. "Ye-es," she answered, jerking her gallantly-plumed hat backward,

"it's a fine life; any day you care to come I'll take you through her."

"Thank you kindly, ma'am," said Cambia, still keeping up the merely casual inflection in her voice, "I'll ask for the captain's wife, I suppose?"

"Oh, no," cried the Creole, with a horrible grin, "his sister."

Both women looked at one another silently, Cambia's eyebrows and the corners of her lips rising a hair's breadth. The stranger put her head on one side, shut an eye, and shook the flashing pendants in her ears. Then she spun round on her seat, asked a few scattered questions concerning the town, the passing people, the amusements, and, producing a scrap of dirty embroidery from her bosom, plunged abruptly into woman gossip concerning the crochet industry, talking apparently for the sake of talking, until M. Florimel and "Old Tim," as Cambia's father was familiarly called, had finished their inspection, when she tilted her head gear at a fresh angle, replaced a damaged earring she had been showing the girl, and, gathering up her skirts, departed as unexpectedly and as indifferently as she had come.

The visitors having gone, Cambia tranquilly set about preparing dinner, while Old Tim chatted with her on the probability of Captain Jules Laforge purchasing rope; but just before the meal was quite ready, during the interval of potato-steaming, she slipped into her little bedroom, and setting the foot-square mirror on the deal dressing-table in a favourable light, consulted it attentively.

The reflected face was, as I have said, a fair one, its chief attraction lying in a dazzling whiteness of complexion, through which a faint pink showed on either cheek—a hue that rarely varied under stress of any emotion. There is a beauty of contour, a beauty of expression, and a beauty that appeals to us through its very novelty. Cambia's belonged to the last order. Taken separately, some of her features were not faultless, but the great dark eyes, black only for the violet tint glowing in their depths, made you forget this as they gravely met yours, while the long lashes shading them and the arching brows above contrasted vividly with the golden tresses crowning the low, broad brow, thus making up a type of face as uncommon amongst the peasantry of southern Ireland as its owner's name.

"An' so, if you had my skin you'd marry an emperor!" she said softly, turning back the high collar of her grey gown, in belated commentary on the Creole's remark. "Faith, I'm thinkin', my yellow phiz, that if you had itself you'd find it hard enough, all through, to catch a man in the marrin' way, for I'm thinkin' 'tis a fool you are, to go battherin' yourself about among a parcel of foreign blagards. I wonder which of 'em is keepin' you?" she continued, two strands of hair caught crosswise between her teeth—"the little chap or his master; I suppose it's the master, or you wouldn't be in such a hurry to point me out to him as if I was a raree show. Wisha, I'd like to make music between ye only for the fun of the thing!"

With which charitable aspiration she whipped the hair out of her mouth, twisted the unruly tresses rapidly, "*in comptum Lacaenae More nodum*," and twittered, "Comin', sir," in answer to old Tim's impatient rapping on the tablecloth

That evening Captain Jules, a swarthy Marseillais, "Black Jules," appeared with the mate, and a purchase of some importance was effected, being afterwards ratified at Jack Doolan's.

Thenceforward the officers of the "Ariane" were occasional visitors at the net-maker's, his daughter and himself being shown over the great ship lying wind-bound before their doors—"the ship of the woman," as she was soon called by the townspeople, because of an undraped female figure that, springing forth, waist-high, from amid a rudely-carved, brilliantly-hued, mass of acanthus leaves at the prow, lifted her white arms as if to grasp the projecting bowsprit, and looked downward, a sinister smile on her painted face. She wore a castellated crown of gold above her gilded hair, and golden bracelets, too, like those respectable matrons assume when in evening dress, as if to to show her nudity was from wantonness, not poverty. Whether she was intended for a Gallic conception of Minos' love-lorn daughter is doubtful, Captain Jules having no opinion on the subject, but as she hung there with unwinking eyes that had dared the black wrath of many a hurricane, and watched the secrets of coral seas, and stared down through opalescent shadows into the nethermost ocean depths, where the great navies of by-gone

days were silently resting with their silent crews, she invested the stately vessel towering aloft with a vaguely mysterious character that still further accentuated her aloofness from the other craft around.

A week passed, but the wind continued blowing steadily up the narrow harbour until the gay pennon at the "Ariane's" main-royal streamed landward, straight as an arrow. Her sailors were made free of the town, had bargained and drunk with the people. Some crochet girls were taken on board to a party where there had been animated doings—the Creole coming ashore next day with a black eye, which she promptly returned to the giver on the wharf. Those scandals, doubly atrocious during Lent, reached the ears of the local clergy, as usual, having lost nothing in transit, and became the subject of quite a special sermon the following Sunday; the immediate consequence being a succession of "fathers iv batins," inflicted on the gay revellers by their "parents or guardians," to whom the preacher had pathetically appealed, producing a corresponding desire in the victims to see more "life," and have another fling at a *Mi-Carême* ball to be shortly given on board the "Ariane," a desire which was frustrated by the most energetic measures—the case of one, Miss Maggie Murphy, calling forth much sympathy—that young lady, when fully and faultlessly attired for the forbidden dance, receiving a pailful of water over her well-oiled head—"to take the clacking off her!"

Undeterred, however, by those checks, the Frenchmen determined on coming to the maids since the latter could not go to them, and, accordingly, they invaded the town, thronging the public-houses, where they were more welcome than even the garrison soldiers, with whom they fought or caroused as the fancy took them, giving on either occasion the police and the patrol a busy time, while the arrival of a circus troupe, "for one week only," which had just left Cork, as the proprietor was careful to explain in his opening address, through respect for Corkonian piety, made it apparent to the gossips that the devil had resolved on besieging the place by land as well as by sea, an impression which no longer admitted of doubt when next Sunday an enthusiastic Parnellite demonstration was held in the "square," so that instead of being a time for the mortification of sinful appetites, the last weeks of this especial Lent passed in a hurly-burly of unholy gaiety and unhealthy excitement, tempered by sweeping clerical denunciations and accompanied by hair-brained prophecies of future woe. Even an Oratorio got up by some ministers' wives proved only another engine in the hands of the arch fiend, for, at the last moment, the tenor of the evening having missed his train, the promoters of the "entertainment" were obliged to insert secular songs and fall back on local talent to save the undertaking from collapse. The spiritual groundlings present bore this change with sufficient equanimity, and passed a most indecorously enjoyable evening, being regaled with the doubtful

morality of "I owe ten dollars to O'Grady" and the distinctly reprehensible sentiments of "Ballyhooly," to which they lent their voices in unsolicited chorus. Most incongruous of all, M. Florimel appeared on the stage, having good naturedly volunteered his services without the faintest idea that he was anything but a *persona grata*, and rendered the "Marseillaise," assisted by half the ship's company, and accompanied by a clerical young lady, giving, in response to an encore—chiefly from the groundlings—a hopelessly Popish hymn to the Madonna, whose exquisite pathos only made the grim, wooden faces in the front benches harder still when its drift was guessed at, and winding up with a blazing Provençal love song which everybody pretended to understand, a song the little singer sang to the throbbing melody of a mandoline, his courteous, observant eyes fixed upon Cambia's attentive face.

The performance over, M. Florimel joined Old Tim and his daughter outside the hall, whence he strolled with them down to the ferry slip, touching the strings of the guitar under his arm during pauses in the conversation, the net-maker telling Cambia as they jogged homeward, having bid him good night, that he was a nate young man, an' not a bit of a rake hell either. And, indeed, it is simply fair to say the violent delights of his compatriots did not appeal to M. Florimel. He came ashore every evening, but, instead of gasconading, like Black Jules, at Jack Doolan's, found it more amusing to stroll about the streets smiling at the

women, or to stand watching the droves of people, some living fifteen miles away, tramping into the "Mission" sermons on Hell—a much better appointed "Hell" than Professor Mivart's—being delivered at a Catholic church crowned by an amazingly sharp spire, a stone's throw from another Catholic church where no Catholics ever came, and then, with a muttered "*Il n' y a que la foi qui sauve,*" saunter across to Old Tim for a smoke before turning in. On the first of those visits Cambia was at home, and having asked him some artless questions on the French language he instantly offered to teach it her in an unspecified number of lessons, together with the guitar which he obligingly brought from the ship, and having the quick musical ear of her people, she readily became an apt pupil, and would sit of an evening humming to herself, above the vibrating chords, while the mate and her father sat cosily at a game of "forty-five." And so before long it came to pass that a visit from M. Florimel was an event of daily occurrence at the net-maker's, and that he walked one evening from the lighthouse to the railway station with the net-maker's daughter, which was very satisfactory as a beginning, and gradually led up to more extended promenades and to a certain trial of skill where, humanly speaking, the stakes are sadly disproportionate.

The game which began then between M. Florimel and Cambia Carty goes by many names, soft or harsh, according to individual idiosyncrasies and

varying degrees of moral convictions, but it is very popular and is played everywhere, even beneath the first moral meridian, running, we all know, through Clapham, and had formed up to the present moment the chief amusement in the little Frenchman's life. The decrees of Providence and the peculiarity of her temperament had, however, precluded Cambia from those opportunities of perfecting herself in its intricacies so freely vouchsafed to the more happily placed of her sex, for society was not aware of the girl's existence, and although more than one scion of the half-breed aristocracy, imposing as a mountebank in costumes which forced the beholder to conclude that every member of the body had separate tastes, would have been happy to offer his services if a wholesome fear of Old Tim's fist and foot did not hold them off, the girl remained until M. Florimel's coming with no better instructors in those matters than the devil and her dreams. I do not know that M. Florimel or Cambia could tell exactly how their lonely strolls began. A chance meeting near the Loretto Convent, where she had been on an errand, prepared the way for another haphazard rencontre by the coastguard station, until at length the mate would find it quite natural to slip away from the ship, pulling a boat over himself, and wait at the corner of the Monks' Orchard wall, which ran down to the beach, watching the moon come and go between the arms of an elm near a conventicle opposite.

It is true that after each walk he returned to the

"Ariane" a little piqued and thoroughly resolved to spend the next night at cards with the captain, but when the first faint stars began to glint overhead again, the face of Cambia rose before him with its vague, sensuous promise, he recalled certain looks, certain voice tones, and the peculiar, half wistful, half malicious grace with which she bade him good night, and he usually ended by repairing to the appointed spot, whence, after a few minutes' undecided pause, he strolled slowly along towards the lighthouse, a cigarette between his teeth, and a fierce resolution in his heart to have an "understanding" with his enchantress; but his determination would thaw when Cambia's light, firm step sounded behind him, and, turning, he saw her beautiful face, shrouded in a fine, woollen shawl, worn mantilla fashion. Then they would loiter past the whitewashed, pepper box structure, and halt to watch the long beam of light cleaving the darkness like an angel's sword, and, rousing themselves, descend the cliff road to pace that glorious stretch of sand curving away westward, seeming to both eye and foot the pile of some rich, tawny, carpet spread out and smoothed by invisible hands, while the murmur of the breaking waves, unceasing but never monotonous, filled their souls with melodies as dreamy and as sweet as ever came to the world across the sighing forests and the rushing streams of the great German fatherland; and M. Florimel would forget not only his intention, but his own self, until some suggestive gesture, some

playful query would bring him back to both again, but his kisses would fall short on neck or shoulder, his arm seek an elusive waist, his feverish hands clutch at empty air. She had no fear in those half earnest encounters. Indeed, she liked the shock of their bodies in the darkness, she liked to hear him breathe hard in futile effort, and know he could not go one step beyond the limit she allowed. Once only did she allude to this openly; wrenching herself free from his arm, she dexterously caught both his wrists with an iron grasp—"I'm stronger than you, me little man," she said significantly, "you can't do more than I leave you, so you may as well behave yourself. Trust you, is it? Faith, I will, as far as I can throw a dead horse!" And M. Florimel, albeit, not perfect in idiomatic English, understood her.

Weeks went by, the "Ariane" required more doctoring than was at first thought necessary; some things needful had to be brought from Cork or Waterford, and there were, of course, delays, the result being that the guitar lessons and the nightly assignations became more frequent, each fresh meeting with Cambia leaving the Frenchman more profoundly puzzled by the enigma she presented to his consideration and the humiliations she inflicted on his pride. He was blessed with a good temper, but there were moments when the easy-going little Pagan felt bitterly incensed, especially as Black Jules and the Creole had chosen to display an interest in the intrigue, and often when the mate and

the captain sat over their game of dominoes, she would thrum a few chords and sing in her fierce, vibrant voice :—

"Au voleur ! crioit Cadet
Ce n' est pas ma faute :
Cher voleur ! disoit Babet,
La fille à notre hôte
Je n' y reviens plus Cadet !
Moi, j' y reviendrai, Babet !
Car c' est la faute du guet,
Ce n' est pas ma faute."

She understood Cambia, too, better than either of her companions.

"Take care, François," she observed on one of those occasions, "*Vous baillez le chat par les pattes,*" she is more than your match. Look at her wrists, like steel ! Her hands, how big and quiet, never picking at her apron ; and her eyes ! She is not afraid of you, *mon cher*, she has no secrets, no past, and yet she knows all that foolish women lose their reputations to learn, only she is cool and strong ; but if you had the trick to rouse her—*Couic.!* It would be a typhoon while it lasted, *et après*, well, not quite comfortable for you, because she would cut your throat while you slept, if she thought you meant to deceive her, and be clever enough to put the blame on somebody else. No, no, '*De marchand et marchand il n' y a que la main*'—you must creep through the wedding ring before your shoes and her's lie under one bed !"

How Cambia herself felt it would be difficult to describe, a certain indolent curiosity had led her on

from the first, propinquity had done much, and her cold, though sensual nature had been warmed into something approaching activity by the impassioned wooing of Florimel, but, nevertheless, she took care in a careless way that was very effective not to get her name "up" with him, and Fortune, the patroness of rogues and fools, favoured her so well that only one person belonging to her "guild" at the "chapel" encountered them in those stolen hours; but the young lady in question, being herself escorted by a member of the gallant Wessex Light Infantry, thought it more charitable not to give the matter the publicity it deserved, and though she dropped one or two hints, nobody took them up, for Cambia was a general favourite.

Old Tim was by no means blind to this flirtation, but he felt intuitively his daughter could take care of herself. He knew, also, Florimel's position was a good one, and although he did not expect very much to come of it, he decided to let the matter go on. This neutrally permissive attitude naturally gave the affair a semi-official character, and no one commented on the frequent visits of the Frenchman to Carty's, nor would anyone have felt a shock of surprise if it had been announced that he and the girl were engaged, so well had luck and Cambia's *sang froid* saved the situation.

At length, just as the "Ariane" was fit for sea again, the wind suddenly changed one bright afternoon, and "Black Jules" determined to sail with the evening tide. The mate came ashore as usual. For the first time he found Cambia awaiting him;

their walk was not a prolonged one, but she took his arm of her own accord, and drew him on to talk of his voyages as she had never done before. He was nothing loath, his spirits and his imagination being both quickened by the prospect of speedy departure, and as they went he spoke of cities built veritably upon the sea, where there were no cars, and you go to do your shopping in a long black boat, just as you would take a cab in London or Paris; of gardens smiling beneath cloudless skies, where gorgeous palaces stand all white with marble that had been hewn into grace and beauty by men whose names still waken a thrill in the pulses of the weary old world that has forgotten so many things; of burning suns and desert sands where ruins stood that mocked the breath of time; all the marvels of the sunny shores and summer seas that lie between the Gates of Hercules and the Golden Horn.

When they returned she accompanied him, contrary to her wont, to the beach; he pulled the oars from their hiding places, untied the mooring rope, and then came back to where she stood above the lessening edge of the slippery uneven stones, his hand outstretched. He looked much smaller and much quieter, she thought, than any night before, and she felt that in spite of many things, he was sorry to go. Besides, he was saying farewell, which invests even those whom we dislike with a fleeting interest, and Cambia did not exactly dislike M. Florimel. She gave him her hand. He pressed and released it. She looked at him, a smile dimp-

ling her cheeks. "Come here," she said, "Francey, an' is that the way you're going to leave me after all our courting?" His eyes lightened, he took a step forward. She did not move; there was invitation in her mouth. M. Florimel closed with her, passed his arm round the supple waist, so warm under the woollen shawl, and kissed her on the lips. She caught his head in her hands and kissed him in return. Hope sprang up in M. Florimel's heart. Was he fated to win at the last moment? His kisses stormed at her lips; he grew enterprising. "Stop now, behave yourself; you're the first man I left do that to me"—a phrase M. Florimel had heard before in other tongues—she gasped, half laughing, and then she slowly kissed him again.

M. Florimel was beaten at his own game. "Cambie," he said, hoarsely, "Cambie, I'm not a good man.——"

"Oh, wisha, you're not," assented Cambia cheerfully.

"But I'm not bad man, either," he continued, grotesquely in earnest.

"No, I suppose you're not until you're tempted," replied Cambia, inclining her face to his.

"I'm hon'r'ble man, I'm Frenchman! I mean hon'r'ble. Will you marry me?"

"Come here," she answered, with a bewitching little laugh. "How many wives have you already?"

"Not one," said M. Florimel.

"Honest, now, aren't there any poor anagshores

over there in France, or any of the other grand places you were telling me of, runnin' about an' askin' everyone if they see one Francey Florimel, for there was goin' to be a christenin', an' he'd be wanted badly?"

"No, no, no!" replied M. Florimel, shaking his head and frowning, "I nevair promise marriage."

He said it with a virtuous air, reflecting that this characteristic differentiated him from Black Jules and the others who always did.

"Will you marry me?" he went on. "I love you." And he would have been less than man if he did not at that silent, yielding hour.

"Well," she said, after a slight pause, "I wouldn't mind marrin' you, but it should be here before everybody."

"Yes, yes, yes," assented M. Florimel, in a passionate whisper, "but when?"

"When you're comin' back—sure I won't run away."

"Why not now? I can signal the ship to wait."

"Oh, you little haythen," cried Cambia, not ill-pleased. "Why, then, that would be the tinkers' weddin', I'm thinkin'."

"But it would be all right. There would be a priest and a ring," said M. Florimel, vaguely, with the air of intellectual superiority befitting a man who stoops to humour an ignorant woman's whim.

"There would," retorted the girl. "Don't you think Father ——," she named the reigning parish priest—"would look queer at us if I went up to him now an' said—Your reverence, will you marry us,

for this young man here is in a great hurry, an' he's dyin' through love for me, an' we were keepin' company such an' such a time, but he didn't find out he wanted to marry me until a while ago, an' as we have no ring convaynient would you plaze give us a loan of the church key? No, then, indeed, I'll have no hole an' corner work! What would me father say? Sure he'd kill me, an' no wonder, too. Sure who ever heard of the like?"

"But I want to marry you hon'r'ble."

She smiled a cruel Irish smile. "Of course you do—what else? But why didn't you find that out before? Sure it wasn't dumb you were or bashful?"

M. Florimel was silent. He felt the cogency of the argument. He was quite in earnest at that particular moment. He remembered that probably the "Ariane" would not go beyond Naples the next voyage, and then sail home again. The time would soon pass. Black Jules would be his own master by that time possibly, and would not make any difficulty of touching at Youghal on his way back—the occasion being considered. So he hastily dramatised a return, saw himself sailing into the harbour at some indefinite period, and Cambia awaiting him, waving the white handkerchief of tradition, while the "assistants" at this heart-moving spectacle cried in chorus—"Bravo! He is a Frenchman, an hon'r'ble man, he say he will come back and he do; ver' well it is good!"

"When I return from the next voyage, let it

be!" he said aloud, a prolonged whistle rousing him, and Cambia assented. There was another passionate, lingering embrace, and then he stepped quickly into the rocking boat, for the tide was on the turn.

"Come here," whispered Cambia. "What about the——guitar? You forgot, 'tis above at the house."

M. Florimel bent to his oars. "Do not trouble for that," he answered. "Keep it love, as a souvenir of me, and when they say to you, 'Ah, bah, he nevair come back!' sing the little song I taught you and the wind will take it to me all round the world!"

She waved her hand and nodded her head. He reflected that being the Creole's it did not much matter, and felt pleased at the graceful way he had made the small present.

Ten minutes later the "Ariane" sailed. Cambia ran up to the wall near the lighthouse to get a last look at her, forming one of quite a little group on the same errand. It was a perfect night ending a perfect day that had come after a week of drizzling mist. The moon rose high in the deep transparent blue of the heavens and wove upon the twinkling water, crisped by the wished-for breeze, a tremulous ladder of light to the dim horizon edge.

The "Ariane," clothed to her loftiest spars, glided out from the harbour, gathering speed as the top and mainsails filled with the breath of the sea. On she swept past the wharves, the skirts of the town, the lighthouse, heeling gracefully as she

went over the bar and the wind took her aloft and the first heave of the ocean billows caught her below, one dazzling cloud of snowy canvas from whose apex flashed the tricolour of France.

The people on the cliff—some fishermen and women, and English soldiers—gave her a half derisive, half good-natured, cheer, which her crew answered instantly, striking up the "Marseillaise," and then, the wind catching her more closely, she bent over, a stately sight, with all her whistling cordage singing to the off-shore wind, the white foam gleaming in her wake, her white sails full against the Easter moon!

So passed the "Ariane." The group on the cliff gradually melted and drifted away, leaving Cambia and poor sentimental Maggie Murphy, whose ardent admiration for Black Jules had not been quenched by the cold water cure, to watch the lessening barque grow shadowy in the wide spaces of the seas, until Maggie, heaving a portentous sigh, said, "Wisha, they weren't so bad after all, poor fellows!" and Cambia, rousing herself, answered the observation with a little laugh. Then, wrapping their shawls tightly round them, they went home quickly, talking with the tongue of the body about a new "Confraternity" badge, but carrying on with the tongue of the spirit another discussion, into which ecclesiastical millinery did not enter.

CHAPTER II.

TIME passed, the cold Lenten weather had gone, the lean east winds had blown themselves to nothingness, the spring warmed into summer, but left a memory of her visit in the tremulous clouds of apple blossom and the sweet showers of lilac bloom that shed a wavering fragrance over the quaint old Spanish gardens here and there through the town. May, with eyes of forget-me-not blue, came and went; June, blushing beneath her own roses, followed, too, and langorous July, sumptuous as a matron whose beauty has reached its perfection, was now slowly departing, and it seemed as if each month had brought some fresh grace of form or feature to Cambia Carty. Her figure was quickly rounding into womanhood, the noble shoulders and arms showed their robust contour through her calico gown, the adolescent breasts grew deeper, the supple back sprang upward from the arching hips that accentuated the litheness of her little waist, and, as she stepped forward on the ball of the foot rather than the heel, an almost imperceptible quiver shot along her frame, lending to her carriage a nameless charm resembling nothing so much as the easy, swaying lift and fall of a stout ship, with all her sails aspread, cleaving the slanting furrows of a summer sea. Men who had known

the girl all their lives paused to look after her in the street, women who had no daughters, did the same, calling on God to bless her, "for she was growing the great girl intirely," and the young men stared or leered their admiration according to their position in "society."

Whether "the inward service of the mind and soul grew wide withal" is more than I can venture to say, nor is it of very great importance, her mental equipment being quite sufficient for her daily needs. Abstract considerations of any kind did not appeal to her, and if she had understood the terms she would probably have classed the altruist, or the philosopher with the fool. She may have had, for aught I know, vague visitings of shadowy hopes and fears, deep reveries, unutterably tender imaginings, but she kept them to herself and remained outwardly, save for her unusual beauty, just like the peasant girls around. She had the national quality of secrecy in petty things—that ineffective cunning which will hide a little theft or a love affair until the crack of doom, but cannot avail to bridle the garrulous tongue in matters of greater moment. Continent as a Vestal, she could nevertheless discuss with the eloquence of a horse doctor those "sexual problems" at present driving our profoundest thinkers into the sympathetic columns of the penny papers, and though she lied on occasion rather than on principle, she amply redeemed this peculiarity by her attention to the much abused "unities," and also by the invaluable habit she had acquired of

looking you straight in the face when she spoke perversely—a habit which Miss Murphy, who squinted, condemned as "disimmodest." She belonged to a "Sodality," her conscience was in the keeping of a fervent young clergyman fresh from Maynooth; her religion consisted in the tranquil acceptance of certain formulæ, and beyond that absolute ignorance or absolute indifference.

Meanwhile, Pat Carroll made his nets or caught his fish, according to the season, and thought much of Cambia, whom he met for a few fleeting moments beside his mother's grave. She had not been to the wake, having come only that morning from Lismore, where she had been with an aunt who demanded her services during some domestic emergency. The driving sleet of the bitter Lenten day, as well as the waiting train, did not allow time for more than a few hurried phrases of condolence, but the way she spoke, and the glance which accompanied the words had impressed themselves upon his consciousness, though at the instant he was too crushed by grief to take note of such things, nor was it until nearly a month later that he adverted to both, and suddenly remembered there had been something strange in Cambia's appearance rendering her quite different from any girl he had ever noticed before, and it was to satisfy himself on this point that he longed to revisit Youghal.

This desire was unexpectedly gratified, for Old Tim suddenly recalled him towards the close of the

summer, so that he might bring his technical knowledge to bear on the discussion of a knotty point concerning the price of flax raised by a Cork dealer.

The jolting train which runs from Kinsale to Cork, and the leisurely one crawling from that city to Youghal, rarely carried a lighter heart or a lighter valise than Pat's, and when the fussy engine, puffing as if it were the "Flying Scotchman," sped down through the lounging crowds upon the platform, lining up with momentary curiosity on their faces, he was the first passenger to leave, which he did with a magnificent disregard for the laws of motion, and then, shouldering his way through the throng of idlers clustering to gape at the people in the first-class compartments getting out, he strode eagerly up the familiar cliff road, sniffing the welcome brine of the sea as he went.

On approaching Tim Carty's warehouse the first object which attracted Pat's eye was Cambia herself seated before the door, as the custom is here, while she worked on the meshes of a net. She was not, or did not seem conscious of his approach until his boots grated on the shingle at her side, when, turning her head, she met his gaze and read its amazed confession pitilessly as she took his big brown hand.

She had appeared fair to look on beside his mother's grave, even though his eyes were dimmed by tears, but here, under the glorious July sunlight, he felt she was something more. It seemed

only yesterday he had left his playmate a laughing, wilful child. He found her now a woman, beautiful with the uncommon loveliness given to peasant girls sometimes—do not pout Mesdames, it is soon beaten out of them again by the wind and the rain.

He intended to salute her gaily, but the change in her held him mute, so that she was the first to speak.

Had Cambia's lot been cast in a higher sphere of life she would have become it, for besides her physical beauty she possessed that gift which, in a peasant, is "animal dignity," and in a countess, ease of manner—a gift which was allied to a tact not unusual among her class. She received her former companion warmly, was very sympathetic with him on his late loss, talked of the happy bygone days, and altogether accorded him a gracious welcome, Pat the while answering in monosyllables, and wondering did any angel or painted saint on church wall or missal margin look sweeter than this daughter of Eve whose living nimbus shone around her lovely face from beneath the folds of foreign silk, all azure and gold, that was knotted at her throat!

The first greeting over, she made room for him on the bench, and led him to speak of the things which she knew lay nearest his interests; while he, poor fellow, could only wonder, wonder, and ask himself had all this come to pass in five little years?

Before long Old Tim joined them, coming in

from the market-place, the visitor, of course, receiving an invitation to stop and have a bit with 'em. Cambia presently rose, saying that St. Molga's trout must be in the water, "twas so long boiling," and went indoors to hasten the cooking of the midday meal, leaving Pat still in the sunshine chatting beside the old man, and although their conversation soon turned on business, Pat's relative having entrusted him with a special commission touching some nets, he felt in some unaccountable way he could "make boulder" on the father than the daughter, the former seeming nearer to his life than the graceful form moving to and fro in the darkened house. The day passed like a dream, and though Pat spoke little to the girl his eyes followed her every gesture, and his last thought at night was not of the dead nor the past, nor the future bargain, but of Cambia among her nets, gazing out to sea with happy, dreamy eyes, yet, weaving the meshes securely.

Is it difficult to foresee what Pat would do? Thenceforth all his leisure time was spent in the vicinity of Old Tim's cottage. He had been as suddenly struck by the blind boy's bow shaft as any prince of story. He was only a poor fisherman it is true, scarce able to spell out his prayer book at Mass, his mental horizon bounded by the sordid cares of a work-a-day world, yet he had in his breast the heart of an old-time knight and in his brain the dreams of a poet.

There are many like him; once in a while the dreams become words, and then the world recog-

nises a Burns; but more frequently the daring thoughts, the dazzling visions of pure and mighty things, the endless wonder at the endless mysteries which hem us round, find no expression save, perhaps, in the wistful glance which follows the sea-mew's flight across the flying spray or the questioning look that rests upon the wake of some great ship as she sinks down behind the shining waters. Under the influence of this sweet intoxication the first passion of an ardent, unworn nature, life became transformed; it seemed as if scales had fallen from his eyes so that earth and sea might yield up to him the secret of their beauty.

And Cambia? She smiled always, smiled when he encountered her beneath the pierced and pointed archways of the town, smiled as he knelt beside her at "the chapel," or strolled with her beneath ruin-crowned Rhin Crew. She made him feel that he was welcome whenever he came to the house, bringing with him often, poor heart, his rustic bouquets of honey-suckle and sweet briar hedged round by long, quivering fern fronds, all of which she accepted with those delightful little cries which come so easily to the lips of women and make the gayest music in a lover's heart. She was not a coquette as the word is generally understood, certainly she did not seek admiration in any hackneyed way, but there was in her than sinister curiosity which impels women of her type to experiment as it were upon the lives of those who come within the sphere of their influence, and set in motion forces whose origin they dimly com-

prehend, but whose consequences they are either too ignorant or too indolent to forecast. Cambia had found in M. Florimel a good subject; in Pat Carroll she discovered a better one, and she compared the two men carefully, the balance, however, inclining in favour of the Frenchman, who she felt sure would return, for she could not conceive any living man that had once known her, passing to another allegiance. Meanwhile, Pat was useful and ornamental as a "follower," it being very pleasant for her to note the shy glances of admiration cast at him by her sisters in the confraternity whom they chanced to encounter during their Sunday walks, and she salved her conscience at the same time with the reflection that as soon as he found out she was engaged any of those other girls would have him "hopping," whilst it would always remain open, in case of future quarrels with the especial friend who should marry him, to refer to Pat as her "lavings."

Furthermore, he had really aroused in her a distinct, though impersonal, liking because of his manliness, his strength, and his evident attachment to herself—a form of affection women easily give men without pausing to point out that it is essentially different from another kind every man naturally believes he has power to excite in at least one woman's heart. Evening after evening Pat "ran over" to them and sat outside the door talking with Old Tim. On such occasions Cambia would draw her wheel to the threshold and sit there

also, spinning, half in shadow, the purr of the wheel filling the pauses of the conversation.

Thus the young man's vacation slipped gradually away. They spoke of many things, but the chief topic was always the sea, and Cambia invariably showed a deep interest whenever the talk drifted towards surmise concerning the lands which lay beyond—Spain just south, England to the east, America, alas! how well they knew, to the west, France "just off there."

One evening, indeed that preceding the day fixed for Pat's departure, Cambia, who had been silent for some time, suddenly asked:—

"How far is France, now?"

"About thirty-six hours' sail," said her lover.

"Yes, but how far, though?"

"Oh, I suppose a couple of hundred mile."

"Begor, it is so," remarked Old Tim, "every step of id. Look," and he pointed a brown, wrinkled finger south-east, "there, there it is now, there's only one screed of land between us and it, and that's the Land's End of England, bad luck to her, she's always comin' between us an' something, an' that'll put a good round on ye to weather it. Well, just straight out from that is Cherbourg, an it's the brisk thrade we ought to be doin' here an' there; yes, an' from Spain, too, faith, like we used to, only the English want to beggar us an' keep everything to themselves, an' cut us off from the rest of the world, until the people would forget us clear an' clean, an' not know whether we're there at all at all, with their

juties an' customs, an' the devil knows what. Look, if you want to take the spirit out of a man, starve him! That's what England is doin' to us."

"Did you ever see any Frenchmen, Pat?" continued his daughter.

"Is it the Johnnies? Oh, indeed, I did, a couple of 'em in Kinsale the day before I kem."

"Would you like them, I wonder?"

"Why, then, I would not, for by all accounts they're no great shakes—they're powerful fond of brandy."

"Bedad, you may sing it," chimed in Old Tim, "we had a big, strollockin' fellow here last spring, an' its my belief 'tis a copper-bottomed belly he had, for that man 'ud drink the ocean dhry if 'twas brandy, an' command the Channel Fleet afther, though, to be sure," he added, on consideration, "they're not all like that; we had another, now, a nice little chap, I forget his name—Flourmeal, wasn't it, Cambia?"

"Florimel," said the girl softly, and she was busy with a knot in the wool.

"Who was he, eroo?" asked Pat.

"The mate," replied Old Tim, "Jules was the other fellow's name, he was the skipper. They came the week after you berrid the mother, God rest her sowl. They had a fine barque, the 'Arryane,' a three-master, begor, a fine ship an' no mistake. She'd go round the world, an' Jules was goin' to own her the next voyage; he told me that, for he spoke free in his drink, an' I never see such a crew in all me born days. 'Twould remind

you of a Noah's Ark, that ship would—men from all quarters of the world, jabbering away from mornin' to night. You'd see 'em dancing of an evenin' on the fo-castle, an' a foreign woman thrumming on a banjo for 'em. Oh, the divil's buck jumper," he added in a lower voice, "she was as yellow as a sovereign, an' her two eyes like coals, begor, you'd wonder they didn't burn themselves out of her head. Oh, they were a queer lot. If you raked hell with a fine tooth comb you couldn't scrape up a neater gang!"

"Faith, I believe you," said Pat seriously. "Them foreigners are regular divils. Could any of them talk English?"

"Jules could, an' the other chap, in a kind of way. They used come over to us nearly every day, for I know a bit of their lingo, an' they'd be talking with their hands an' their shoulders an' their eyes, asking me what ud' be the price of this or that an' everything else, an' I'd say so much or so much, an' they'd go to the places I'd tell 'em in the town, and the best of it is," continued Tim, poking his guest in the ribs, "but you'd think while they were here Jack Finn, the fellow who has the Italian warehouse in the Main street, was my twin brother, puttin' in for a good word with Jules; an' the wife was mighty polite to Cambia, my dear, though another time she'd pass her as near as I'm to you in the square. Oh, begor, we were grand people intirely while they were here. The little chap used teach Cambia French, an' he showed her how to play on a fiddle, or a banjo, or some

other divilment; sure she has it hangin' up there inside on the wall, near the fryin' pan, an' you'd mistake one for the other in the dark."

"Did they stay long?"

"Nearly a month, an' the people weren't sorry when they left, for although they were good customers, you'd rather have 'em for a day than a week. There was neither luck nor grace between 'em, an' they hadn't a screed of religion except the little chap—he used to go to Mass sometimes, but Jules an' the rest hadn't a good word for a priest. You should see the scowl Black Jules, as they used call him, give me the time I told him to pray to St. Antineen for his knife when he lost it—it's all on account of the French revolution an' liberty, Father Tom says."

"Liberty is no harm, sure," observed Pat, a new accent of irritation in his voice. "Sure 'tis what wer'e always fighting for?"

Old Tim put his head on one side. "An' how do you know 'twould be worth havin' when you got it?" he asked. "An' how do you know whether 'twould be for the good of your sowl? Look what it done for them Frenchies."

"It's a grand thing, anyhow!" retorted Pat, rising and shaking himself, as he held his waist belt. He seemed annoyed and spoke loudly, looking seaward, for he belonged to the new Ireland, which is slowly feeling its own strength, and has learned to think.

The Scylla and Charybdis of all conversation in Ireland are politics and polemics. Cambia had

the true woman's contempt for both, so she gently arrested what threatened to be a bitter altercation by the remark, "Aren't they very polite, for all?"

"The Frenchies? Wisha, I d'n know," rejoined the fisherman, pushing his cap to one side, I didn't see much politeness in 'em."

"I hear they have gran' churches an' gardens across?"

"Well, yes, I don't misdoubt but they have, though I was never there myself, an' I wouldn't care much to go there, either."

"Yerrah, where 'ud you be goin', Pat?" observed Old Tim. "Cows far off wear long horns. I knocked about a bit meself an' see some quare things, but I never met a better country or a kinder people outside the four walls of Ireland. Look, you'd go into one of them foreign chapels, an' begor you wouldn't know where you'd be goin'—they're so dark an' lonesome, an' not wan altar but twenty, begad, in holes an' corners, an' on this side an' on that. An' the seats! You never see such inventions! with trap-door bottoms to 'em that near took the fingers off of me the first time I tried to manœuvre 'em. Well, then, outside doors everything is parched an' kiln dried an' burnt up from the sun; to be sure there are gardens to go to—regular gardens, my dear, laid out an' all with fountains, mind you—you'd see the water springin' up out of the mouths of stone fishes an' lions an'——"

"Unicorns?" suggested Pat.

"Yes, faith, an' all sorts of shapes, an' the water as fine as the first foam of a breakin' wave

at the point yonder. No doubt, all that's very fine; but the swans tuk my taste most of all, swimmin' about, with the nurses an' babbies feedin' 'em. An' 'tsn't that, but at every corner a figger of a woman or a man stuck up an' hardly a rag between 'em all, an' they gladiatorin' away before the people as cool as you please, an' nothin' goin' on around you from mornin' to night but murder an' love-making an' robbery an' shuicide, an' ——divilment of all kinds!"

Pat gave an assenting guffaw to this masterly exposition of the experiences to be obtained from foreign travel, but Cambia only uttered a little sigh—half a laugh, half a catching of the breath—as she rose rather abruptly to go indoors. Just then, too, a bugle call jauntily rang from the camp on the hill, and the old man's thoughts took another direction. Soon after, their visitor, who had grown somewhat silent, departed, twisting, absent-mindedly, between his fingers a strand of wool which he had taken from the spindle of the deserted spinning-wheel.

The next day, Sunday, Pat's resolution was decisively taken. He asked Old Tim for Cambia under the arch of the Clock Tower, as he was coming from "last Mass," in the simple, direct fashion he knew. The father's answer was favourable. He had no objection, he said, if the girl herself was willing. He, however, was not enthusiastic, for he felt she could do better from a social point of view. There was Mat Corrigan, who owned a snug house and some acres beyond

in Clashmore; or Thady Heagerty, with his tidy bit of land up yonder on the high country between Youghal and Lismore—a desolate, wind-swept tract where the roadway winds, often without fences on either side, through stretches of moorland that are gold and purple with the blossom of gorse and broom, where the view is bounded only by the great hills separating the county of Cork from the county of Tipperary; or, lastly, Tom Ryan, across in Ardmore, but a few miles away as the crow flies—a pleasant walk once you are safe on the narrow spit of land running out towards Youghal with that strip of treacherous water shimmering between. All those were admirers, suitors, what you will, more or less openly, but not one of them had spoken out so boldly as poor Pat, who, besides his youthful vigour and the share in the fishing smack, had no worldly goods whatever. But Old Tim, who was neither a fool nor a miser, saw that if the girl did choose the young man, such a son-in-law would be the most desirable for himself—a slight sense of inferiority and a strong one of gratitude being, in his opinion, no inconsiderable factors towards ensuring supremacy in all family matters Of M. Florimel's offer he knew nothing, and if he had, would probably have attached slight importance to it. Indeed, he half regretted now he had permitted the intimacy, for, when one has a daughter to dispose of, one cannot be too careful. In a small place, where tongues are long and rivals many, it is easy to spoil a girl's market.

Pat waited impatiently until evening, when he sauntered in to Old Tim, for the ostensible purpose of a smoke and a chat before saying good-bye. He was much disappointed, however, to find the Cartys had a visitor in the person of one Danny Cogan, of Cork, a gentleman whose business was connected with Old Tim's special industry—a bargain having been just concluded between them, in which the older man felt he had been slightly overreached, though the exigencies of the moment obliged him to close with the hard terms of the other rather than lose a contract for a particular kind of rope.

Danny was a small, clean-shaven, young man with a perky manner, a rapid stuttering delivery when excited, and a wandering, shallow eye, which stared at everything but observed nothing, the most characteristic feature of the face being, perhaps, the lips, which had a chronic twist at one of the corners from Danny's trick of constantly talking aside in a stage whisper; they were usually ajar, too, as if the owner's convivial habit of perpetually introducing between them the rims of porter pots had effectually prevented their reassuming a natural position. He passed his hand frequently over his close-cropped head while he talked with Cambia, for the day being an excursion Sunday he had combined business with pleasure—*i.e.*, drinking as much "beer" as he could buy or get anyone to give him, and, consequently, he felt a little warm.

On being introduced to the fisherman he

"sized" the latter up with a comprehensive grin, addressing him immediately a few observations of a bantering and cheerful nature which Pat could neither imitate nor answer, and then returned to an interrupted discussion on music.

"Dere very fond ov music in Cork," said Danny. "Sure Cork is de Atens ov Ireland. You should see 'em when de Italian opera comes in or an *opéra buff*, or a pantomime! Look, they'd be packed like herrins' in a barrel down in de pit ov de theayter or up in de gallery, and every one ov dem with clowsheens on him! Yerrah, 'twould be harder to shove a false note on de Bank ov England den upon de Cork lads."

"Her ladyship here plays a little, but I suppose she'd be ashamed before you," remarked Old Tim with mock humility.

"De piana?" asked Danny, who for the life of him could not resist the joke.

"No, then, indeed, yerrah, where 'ud be the room for a piana here? It's the banjo——the guitar I mean."

"De banjo? Oh, yes, have you any Christie Minstrel songs, Miss?"

"No, it's French she sings mostly," interposed the father, proudly, "but she can play 'Youghal Harbour' an' a few other tunes, too, on it. Wisha, Cambia, sing a bit for us girl, sure Pat never heard you."

Thus appealed to, Cambia rose, directing an apologetic glance at the young men, and composedly taking the mandoline from its hook on

the wall, seated herself again, commencing without any prelude the same song M. Florimel had rendered at the "Oratorio."

She had simply learned it by rote, but, as she sang, the rich low tones of her voice lent themselves insensibly to the splendid melody until it seemed as if the passionate spirit of the music had breathed itself into her from the time-worn pine that had echoed so many long silent voices, so many long-forgotten songs since the day when it passed from the hands of Lucas Maler to the world. There were three verses, with a refrain that haunted one, so acute was the sense of its yearning pathos, and when the last chords had ceased vibrating through the little room Pat sat staring at Cambia as if he had seen something in her he did not see before, or as if the music by some subtle necromancy had revealed something up to that moment hidden from him. The Athenian was pleased to express approval, "'Dat's a very nice little air," he observed, with the stinting manner of a critic who weighs his pronouncement. "'Twould remind you of 'White Wings' an' de 'See Saw' Waltz, wouldn't it? Where did you get dat chune, now?" he continued. "Is it from an opera?"

"I d'n know," said Cambia, wearily. "It's a love song, I think. Fran——, the gentleman who taught me said it would be hard to put it into English."

"Bedad I wouldn't be surprised," remarked the acute Danny, "there's blagardin' in it, too, I sup-

pose. There nearly always is in them foreign things. Do you play de concertina, Miss?"

"No, sir," answered the girl with becoming modesty.

"Ah, if you heard my sister Katty playin' 'Let Erin Remember de Days ov Old,' an' 'Two Lovely Black Eyes,' an' 'Annie Rooney,' you'd admire it," said the critic, shaking his head. "It's the ten-keyed concertina she has. Can you play 'Annie Rooney' on dat?"

Cambia admitted she could not.

"Can you play de fiddle; me father plays de fiddle, but he plays it best when he's a bit sprung; he's nervous at other times."

"Is it the Scotch fiddle?" demanded Old Tim, who could not repress the gibe, for he by no means relished this undervaluing of Cambia's accomplishment, and he was already half addled by his guest's incessant babble. The Athenian laughed constrainedly.

"No, indeed," he retorted, "but he play what no one here can, I think,—de Scotch bagpipes! "I'll never forget the blessed night he brought a pair home. He was on a tare at de time, an' nothing would do me joker but to take them to bed with him an' play softly like, just to show me mother what fine music it was, until de screechin' set all de neighbours' cocks crowin', an' we hadn't a wink ov sleep to mornin'. Oh, Cork is de place. Sure dey have grand bands, too; to hear dem de time Parnell came! 'Twould frighten you, man,

de reception dey gave him was fit for a king. Dere's great spirit in Cork!"

Old Tim bent his grey Irish eye, that could be so cruel as well as so kind, upon the speaker, and said slowly, "Damn nice treatment you gave the man after, didn't you?"

The Athenian sniggered. "Oah, well," he observed, apologetically. "sure dere's a great deal to be said on both sides. Everyone took a different view dat time. Sure me father is a Parnellite an' I'm an anti. I have him in a regular pick, when I like, about politics. But, between ourselves, Parnell was a fool. He had no one with him at the end only the Fenians."

"Only the Fenians!" echoed Old Tim, who, in his youth, had belonged to the usual type of Irish revolutionary society, with its regulation number of spies, its secrecy that was the jest of the local police force, and its tragi-comic denouement. "Yerrah, man, don't leave anyone hear you talking like that! Sure whatever was done at all for Ireland was done by the physical force men! I never believed in Parnell," he continued, remembering he voted "clerical" at the last election, but none the less eager to vent on patriotic grounds a little of the irritation he felt at having been bested in his bargain by the chattering "jackeen" before him. "I never believed in Parnell, but if I did I'd stand to him in his trouble, be J——s I would. I wouldn't go cheering him to his face an' laughin' at him behind his back like a little drunken dhroleen that didn't know his own mind two minutes,

or hadn't any mind to know. By G—d I'd show I hadn't the memory of a hare anyway for what people done for me an' mine!"

This was the opening of the flood-gates. The Corkonian pleaded eloquently that he went with the majority always, and that he would not go against the priests. That it was a "damn foolish thing" for any man in business to do so, a wink being as good as a nod to a blind horse; while Old Tim, who had been influenced by exactly the same potent considerations, talked magnificently of gratitude, honour, self-respect, and a variety of other perfectly irrelevant things, Pat looking on grimly, while Cambia tranquilly touched a chord now and then upon the Creole's guitar. It made a strange, significant scene in the gathering dusk, the excited Irish faces, the bitter words, the vehement gesticulation, the sudden blazing passion which rose and died down as quickly as a fire of straw, the foolish laughter that companioned the fiercest denunciation—the laughter of a race that in all its centuries of fret and struggle has not yet learned to take either itself or its ideals seriously.

At length, during a lull in the dispute caused by the collision of two perfectly unanswerable arguments, Danny looked at his watch, and declared in the everyday-tone of commerce he was afraid he must be goin', and understanding that Pat was bound for Cork also, proposed that they should set out immediately. Mindful of the silent fisherman's mission, Tim instantly created an opportu-

nity by rising and accompanying his other guest some distance from the house. Pat, with a terrible tightening at his heart, got up to go, too, shook hands with Cambia, and then paused on the threshold. The girl hung the guitar upon its hook, and, turning quickly, shut the "half door," resting her arms on the edge a moment later. Pat took one or two steps and then returned, his face pale, his breathing quickened. "Cambia," he said, quietly, "I'm not much good for talkin', an' I haven't much time to spare, because I hadn't courage to speak up till now, but I love you. Will you marry me, Cambia dear?"

She looked at him almost smiling, her white neck rising from her gown that opened in front, like a lily from its green sheath.

"Will you, girl?" he repeated, putting his arm around her and pressing her to him so that the stout boards creaked.

"Stop, Pat," she gasped, fretfully, "you're chokin' me!"

He loosened his embrace in a second, but kept his arms around her, as a boy might cage a bird in his hand. She lowered her eyes.

"I'm very sorry, Pat," she began, "but——"

"You don't care for me, is it?" he demanded, interrogating the bowed head.

"Oh, then, I do, but there's another party asked me an' I said yes. Sure I didn't think you had a wish for me at all."

His arms dropped to his sides. "That will do, Cambia," he replied. "You were always a truth-

ful girl. God bless you. Is it the Frenchman, the mate your father was talkin' about?" he added, a growing light breaking upon him.

"It is, then just," answered the girl, slowly, for she rather enjoyed the situation. "We're to be married after the next voyage."

Pat gulped at something in his throat.

"I'm really sorry," she repeated, with a faint thrill of earnestness in her tones, his quietude impressing her more than any appeal could have done. "But he was the first, an' you'll easily find better girls than me."

"Maybe so," he said, hopelessly, "though never a girl I'll love like you again, an' if ever you want a friend, Cambia, you'll have him in me up to the gates of death, an' beyond them. Good-bye, girl," he continued, moving away, "I must be back here in a month on business with the father, but don't take it unkindly if I'm not as I used to be with you, for I couldn't bear it now that I spoke out an' that I am too late. God guard you, an' bring the man you tuk safe home to you!"

Not another word was said on either side, for even Cambia dared not trust her voice, and ten minutes later Pat Carroll was *en route* for Cork.

CHAPTER III.

THERE are times when Youghal wears an aspect less familiar to the tourist or the holiday seeker, when, for instance, the glow of summer is departed, and storms sweep over its furze-clad hills, until the little town seems to cower under their shelter; as fierce south-western gales setting steadily inland drive before them armies of mighty billows, and these thundering on the rocks below the lighthouse, where once St. Mary's nuns lit the beacon, scale the high sea-wall beyond and scourge the passers-by on the road above with showers of stinging spray, while great yellow surges leap incessantly across the harbour bar, which the townspeople will tell you saves Youghal from being swamped, for everywhere here the water is gaining on the land.

Towards the close of just such a day the watchers from the lighthouse saw, beating slowly but surely in, a large ship of foreign build. She had shown microscopic, an hour earlier, luffing perseveringly, but was forced along before the furious shoreward wind which had blown with increasing violence since morning, and as she came, amidst an almost continuous shower of spray, the flash and report of guns broke from the port bow at intervals. That the vessel was in distress soon became evident, it

being piteous to see how heavily she pitched under scanty canvas in her unequal fight with the murderous billows out there, and the cruel wind screaming between her cordage.

The news that a ship was off the port in such a sea soon spread, and dozens of the warm-hearted fisher folk came hurrying up to watch with eager sympathy the awful struggle going on in their great shelving bay, where the staggering ship was being headed inch by inch towards the curving sands, as a hunted animal is driven within the toils. One little group clustered around a grizzled coastguard, who, sheltered under the lee of a wall, looked seaward through his telescope.

"'Taint no sort of use, my son," he drawled, addressing the silent tossing thing upon the object glass, "you'll have to come in, though 'tis the hell of a risk for you, and you know it, for you're sending the cargo overboard like blazes, but it's better than being beached at Carty's Cove in ten minutes—and you must look sharp now or 'tis coming ashore at Clay Castle you'll be, because there's nothing built afloat could tack in that damn wind as you were trying to do."

The minutes went slowly by as, sometimes hidden behind a tempest of whirling mist, the watchers lost her, and then again caught the outline of her reeling spars looming closer. Presently she was so near that they could plainly see how men aloft on her foremast endeavoured to take in what little sail it carried, and how the storm, wresting it from their grasp, tore it into jagged

ribbons, which flew out flapping madly around the masthead, already strained enough, till the stout ash snapped and fell, with all its gear, a trailing mass across the bows of the labouring craft, that seemed, as her bowsprit rose and fell, striving to shake off the tangle of spars and rigging, while a sharp musket shot rang from a port hole like a cry for help. The Youghal lifeboat had meanwhile put out, but, after an ineffectual effort to gain the lee side of the low headland forming one arm of the harbour, was driven back furiously upon the beach with two oars broken and one of the rowers seriously injured.

A determined attempt was now made by the ship's crew to cut away the encumbrance, but just as she was off the same headland mentioned a heavy sea struck her, tearing with it in resistless course, 'sprit, mast, yards, and chaos of tattered canvas, a thrill running along the lengthening line of spectators on the cliff as they noted how much nearer she was thus forced towards the merciless rocks and the treacherous sand beyond, where the breakers unceasingly roared. Yet, although staggered, she appeared to right herself, and with that semblance of volition observable in a ship which answers her helm, steadily laboured onward. She was soon so near that the coastguard, resting his glass on the parapet, read her name aloud, slowly spelling each letter out, "Ariane." As he did so a hand closed upon his arm; he turned and saw Pat Carroll's face close to his own.

"Are you sure it's the 'Arryane?" shouted the

newcomer, for scarce a lower sound than a shout could live amid the wail and the wrath of the sea. The man nodded, proffering his telescope.

"I know every stick of her," he replied, "she was here a month, driven in just like she is to-day, but then she rode a damn sight higher in the water than she does now. That big fellow in the worsted cap is the skipper; don't you see him at the wheel? Many's the good old booze he had down at Doolan's, though 'tisn't brandy he's thinkin' of now I'd swear."

No. Jules Laforge was not thinking of brandy just then, as his sinewy hands grasped the restive spokes, and his fierce black eyes stared onward over the tumbling seas. He was thinking of his little Gascon wife, of his two-year-old child; he was thinking of the old mother with the sightless eyes and the poor listening face that lit up like a flash when his returning step was heard upon the threshold; he was thinking of the gaudy little shrine in the village church, where the sailors' wives knelt on Sundays, and where the votive ships were swinging before the "Star of the Sea"—he was thinking of a great many other things he would rather not think about during those awful moments while the fate of the "Ariane" hung trembling in the balance.

Pat Carroll scarcely heard what the other man said. He was sweeping the deck with the telescope, and wondering whether he would know M. Florimel if he saw him. He had just come from Cork, having set out, much against his will,

from Kinsale the day before, and as he stopped now to watch the tossing ship a tempest of indescribable emotions shook his soul. Yes, there was the "Ariane," with Cambia's promised husband on board, returning to claim her! But the bar lay between, and he heard the people saying that the tide was only beginning to flow. Why not wait there until the sea had done its work, until his rival's body, all swollen and livid, was washed up to his feet, and then pass on his way? But with this thought came the memory of Cambia's face when she said "he was the first."

A woman's glib tongue at his elbow was telling how the lifeboat had been beached, and how Tim Casy, of Cross Street, got his arm broken, the narrator adding that his mother was tearing her hair out by handfuls because an intelligent neighbour had informed her he was killed. Pat set his lips, returned the telescope to the coastguard, and pushing his way out of the crowd, looked over his shoulder at the quivering masts of the "Ariane."

"I'm goin' to do for you, my man, what you wouldn't do for me," he muttered, "an' what I suppose I'm a fool for doin', but I love the girl better than you do out there in your fine ship, an' I'll bring you to her, though 'tis dead I'd rather see her than in your arms!"

Then, pulling himself together, he hurried down the road dotted here and there with knots of people trudging along towards the point of interest, by the convent and terrace walls, thus to escape the

drenching sheets of sea water that sometimes arched the road. As he went he caught sight of an approaching female form hastening recklessly up the footpath, where the shattered glass and twisted frame-work of the gas lamps mutely attested the fury of the gale. It was Cambia, and she was saying, "Jesus, Jesus!" as she ran. They drew nigh; their eyes met. Pat's gallant soul looked out of his, transfiguring the homely face. There was no time for words. He pointed up the slanting road behind, and breaking into a quick run passed her. She turned swiftly, with a flash of comprehension that made her one fleeting moment somebody vastly different from the Cambia Carty men knew; and, resuming her race, sped on to the lighthouse.

"Will any man take Tim Casy's place?" cried the coxswain of the lifeboat, swinging a cork belt as he spoke, "the tide 'll be gettin' stronger every moment we wait."

A quick step came lightly over the fresh, slippery sea weed strewn upon the beach.

"I will," said Pat Carroll's voice.

"Bravo! me hearty," shouted the first speaker, recognising him instantly. "Tim was pullin' stroke; can ye?" he continued, adjusting the lifebelt on the young man's heaving chest.

"I often pulled stroke in as broken water!" answered Pat, the dauntless Celtic gaiety that danger arouses in the Irish heart lifting his tones.

"That 'ud be hard," returned the other gravely, "but you needn't tell me what you can do, sure I

saw you at the regatta off the Old Head last summer two year." Then he added, as the crew took their places, and the long boat was launched, "Steady, me lads, no fancy strokes now, but when I give the word hit her across like winkin'."

The "Ariane" had sustained other injuries besides the loss of her bowsprit and foremast, her boats having been also swept away and her bulwarks stove in at intervals, but yet on the heaving deck there was feverish activity, an unbroken line of men was trampling to and fro between one of those breaches and the main hatchway, heaving overboard barrels, bales, crates, and boxes, as fast as the men 'tween decks could hoist them from the hold, M. Florimel now assisting, now cheering them on, now directing by rapid gestures those who had dared to go aloft and wrestle with the bellying canvas that only aided the raving wind to drive them on the leeward shore as the ship crept forward, feeling her way for the deep water channel, her shattered prow pointed to the little town whose flickering lights were beginning to wake up in the early gloom of a September evening.

The excitement on the cliff became intense. Was the skipper fully aware of the terrible danger lying down under his keel, but betrayed by an irregular line of tawny foam? Would the barque clear—for she was of many tons and heavily laden?

In their desire to warn, the watchers bellowed directions which the raging gale, as if jealous of its prey, cast back in their teeth.

Suspense was soon at an end The vessel came

on between the yellow surges, seemed to pass through, went back half her own length, again forged forward in a strange, uncertain way like a maimed and blinded creature that stumbles in the dark, then stopped—shivering amid a cloud of driving spray, her tall mast with its human load going down as if smitten by an unseen blow. She had struck on the bar, and her doom was sealed!

Mingled with the involuntary cry of horror from the cliff came the shrieking hiss of a rocket, but its line fell short. Almost simultaneously, however, another flung its wavering arch of fire from the sea, and a cheer was raised as the straining crowd caught sight of a thin cord stealing snake-like across the seething cauldron of boiling foam to the land, showing communication between the ship and the shore had been established. Prompt measures had also been taken on board the "Ariane" to meet the new disaster, and old seamen nodded approval over the heads of the crowd at the celerity with which the anchors at bow and stern were run out, thus preventing the vessel from going on her beam ends, while at the same time a small number of men, headed by M. Florimel, quickly cut away the stays and shrouds of the mast that had gone by the board, and that now threatened every moment to stave in the strong timbers as it wallowed alongside amid its indescribable tangle of yards and rigging, sometimes lifted a third of its own length as the great ship rose and fell in a horrible see-saw fashion, which made the spectators groan through their cheers when at last

it was sent whirling to lee upon the slanting roll of the enormous breakers that hurled it a few moments later upon the jagged rocks below. Up and down, up and down, went the "Ariane," her glistening white figure-head now plunged in hissing foam, now lifted high in the sinister glare of the Bengal lights, but, undaunted still, Black Jules worked on, everything which good seamanship could suggest, or cool daring execute, being attempted or accomplished despite the succession of mighty seas that deluged the stout decks at closer intervals of time. The task of lightening the ship, which had been momentarily abandoned, was now resumed, the skipper working furiously and encouraging the reeling men, staggering under their burdens, while after every sea he climbed to the taffrail and peered down at the straining, grinding hawser, now slack, now sickeningly taut, as the cruel lift and plunge of bow and stern went on; but the work was terribly slow, for they dared not open the port holes to abridge their labour, the vessel being more than once absolutely buried beneath an avalanche of green water that hid everything on board, leaving visible only the mizzen-mast, now rocked loose from its stays, and reeling drunkenly to and fro. "Mother ov God, save them!" moaned the women on the cliff, Cambia's voice shrill above all. "God Almighty, she'll never stand it," gasped a townsman, "sure that weigh beam 'ud break up an ironclad." "No matter a damn, I tell you she will, be J——s!" shouted an optimistic fisherman in the brotherly

spirit of contradiction. Look at the tide comin' in an' all, yerrah, he'll have her off in a jiffey."

True the tide was rising, but not in the best manner for a ship in the "Ariane's" plight. Immense lines of racing seas, a black yawning valley between each, had begun to sweep roaring past the point opposite, shattering themselves upon its rocks whence they flung their wind-driven spray in gigantic columns upward as if to catch the low rack of ragged clouds that had outraced them, and then reforming rushed with redoubled fury upon the tormented vessel, raving along her shivering sides and crashing upon her deck till the watchers wondered how those astir there could draw their breath between each terrific assault. "Can't ye do anything? Are ye men?" cried Cambia, her arms uplifted. "Yeh, what 'ud be the good, girl, sure they're in the hands of God?" replied the coastguard, not unkindly, for he had seen more than he talked of those fresh Lenten evenings. "But the lifeboat!" said the girl. "Why don't ye go down instead of standing there an' man her?" As if in response a faint cheer shuddered up against the careering wind. It came from the direction of the town, and was passed along by the straggling crowds of sightseers labouring up on the road, a distant patch of white and blue, which was the boat, showing fitfully at the same moment just opposite the angle where the women's bathing-boxes stand in the summer. She was crawling slowly in the very teeth of the wind, her rowers striving to cheat the tide. The cheers from the

cliff swelled in volume, and then suddenly died off in a shuddering cry—the line between the land and the ship had parted, two men who had been engaged in binding it more securely to the foremast going overboard with it. For an instant there was silence, then confused murmuring from the rocks beneath, a shout, a shriek, a cheer—there was a man on the rope! Then, the whole human interest of the hour centered about that one gasping atom of humanity, overwhelmed, buffeted, stunned, hurled hither and thither by a dozen furious seas, but still clinging desperately to the cord that was fast drawing him to salvation. At length a rapturous roar proclaimed he was saved, and presently a panting, wild-eyed sailor came staggering up the uneven steps by the lighthouse. His first question to his friendly supporters after he had recovered his breath was—"Is this yere port Youghal?" On being answered in the affirmative he muttered an oath, and sitting down on a fragment of rock proceeded to wring the water out of his guernsey with a distinctly aggrieved air.

In reply to many kindly queries he told his interlocutors that he was an Englishman—he was, Noah Smith by name—of Deal. He shipped in the "Ariane" at Naples through having had a disagreement with his former skipper. The French ship had a devilish unlucky voyage, misfortune seeming to dog her from the very first. They barely cleared Naples when two of the crew fell ill of fever, thus making it harder to work the vessel when the gale caught her; then the skipper, though

good enough for a mere dago, wasn't all there, he'd been drinking—'cos it bein' his last voyage as another man's man—and had not come off the bout he began at Naples, where one of the mates got married to an Eyetalian woman, and where they delayed too long giving balls and sky-larking generally, which it was let them in for the storm it did. They tried to weather the thing out, and then to run before it, but the gale blew them clean from their course, and they hadn't the faintest idea of where they were until eight bells that day, when they sighted the Irish coast, and soon after Youghal—leastways the first mate said it was, for he'd been watching the land through a telescope all the time they were in the offing, and worked like hell to sheer away; but the skipper, seeing it was useless to tack, determined to run in and take 'is blooming chance—which he did," continued Noah, with a fine sense of the obvious, glancing at the pitching mast of the "Ariane." Asked if there were any passengers on board he said, "Yes, one, a woman, the mate's wife; there was another female, too, the stewardess, a reg'lar good 'un; she nursed the sick men proper. It was she fired the signal guns while they were running in, and the rocket when they struck, and before that stood at the door of the state saloon with her revolver, threatening to shoot the first man in when some cowardly lubbers, thinking the ship was going to pieces, sneaked down and made a dive for the brandy casks! She was a true, good lass, and how she was below, working hard in her shift

sleeves, helping the crew to get the cargo up from the hold. The other woman wasn't any use whatever, clean off her chump from fright, down on her marrow bones in the cabin pattering prayers as fast as hops, while her husband was cursing like blazes on deck.

Cambia Carty listened to all this on the outer edge of the crowd, her white face hooked over the shoulder of the woman before her. "What's the mate's name, if you plaze?" she suddenly asked, the words escaping her bloodless lips without any distinct conscious effort.

"Florimel," replied Noah Smith, "a brisk little chap with ear-rings."

"You lie!" said Cambia.

The sailor turned his ruminative blue eyes upon her slowly, but before he could quite grasp the meaning of her words a shrill French blasphemy shrieked past the crowd on the cliff, piercing the convent walls behind, where the shuddering nuns knelt, praying for the souls in such deadly peril. There was a simultaneous movement, and instantly the parapet was one curving line of wind-swept faces—a cry of horror going up as the crowd realised that the long strain on the "Ariane's" stern hawser had snapped the stout links, and that the vessel was being slowly forced over on her side by the rush of the driving billows; but the right bower stood her in good stead yet, so that she did not careen violently, thus affording a precious interval during which the crew might look to their escape, for any chance of rescuing the ship now

seemed hopelessly remote, though, possibly, if the stentorian orders Black Jules issued had been promptly obeyed she might have resisted the steady sidelong push of the inrushing seas, and, aided by the sail M. Florimel had hastily rigged on the remaining mast, might have eventually risen from the bar with the incoming tide; but the crew of the "Ariane" were not made of stubborn stuff—the courage being beaten out of them by the icy seas which chilled them to the bone, and by their prolonged struggle with the wind during that day and the previous night. As it was, they tacitly accepted this last stroke of fate, and without another effort the men, disregarding further commands, hurried tumultuously to the bow, the bulwarks, the broken mast stumps, wherever the hand could secure a desperate hold, until the approaching lifeboat should take them off.

At this juncture a strange, sudden sinking in the wind made a lull, more impressive, more menacing, than even the fury of the gale it succeeded, through which the people on the cliff could distinctly hear the confused voices on ship board crossed by the sharp, excited accents of women; and presently the Creole appeared, dragging up the tilted companion-way another girl, who shrieked and clutched at every object which presented itself to her hands. M. Florimel rushed forward as soon as he caught sight of her, and half carrying, half leading, the terrified creature to the stump of the foremast, bound her there, though with difficulty, for she struggled wildly, and perpetually screamed

for succour. Jules now shouted to bring up the sick men, but the panic-stricken crew, crowding away from his eye, had no ears for orders any longer; utterly demoralised, they only yelled the louder to the lifeboat, which was then labouring across from the protecting shelter of the headland on the left. Seeing that all chance of making them obey was gone, he himself left the deck, and, assisted by Florimel and the Creole, brought up the fever-tortured men, securely lashed in their hammocks, just as the lifeboat neared the ship, another moment and she was alongside. There was no shouting now, no gesticulating, even the watchers on the cliff were dumb with anxiety. One by one the sailors on board jumped to safety, the sick men being helped over the side amid the thunderous crash of breaking seas, for the "hole in the wind" had gone by, and the gale was actually tearing along the very surface of the water, lashing the yelling surges to frenzy.

The "Ariane" groaned like a sentient thing, and rocked or rolled as if she were making a last desperate effort to right herself, while the constant grinding of her starboard bower had worn a groove along her planks. By sheer instinct Jules rushed back to the wheel. Ah, if the stern hawser had only held ten minutes longer!

M. Florimel untied the woman from the mast, and reeled with her to the breach in the bulwarks, where the lifeboat and its excited faces were tossing. "Closer!" shouted the seaman, the rolling of the wreck appearing to diminish; the boat stole

nearer. The woman, who had been drenched into semi-insensibility by the billows which burst over her while lashed to the mast stump, now recovered consciousness, and began to scream shrilly.

"Jump, can't ye?" cried Pat Carroll.

The young man made an effort but fell, the woman writhing in his arms.

"Stop till she heels to port again," said the coxwain. "Now!"

Grasping the raving creature closer, the mate obeyed, but just as he sprang off, the female strengthened by fear, wrenched herself free, and snatching madly at the chains clung there, shrieking for a priest and absolution.

One second of eager groping at the oar blades thrust forth to help him, and M. Florimel was saved, but, powerless for the moment, could only gasp out, "Mon Dieu, sauvez-la, ma femme, ma femme!" before he sank fainting under the feet of the rowers, the woman on board going hither and thither with the vessel's roll, keeping her hold and screaming pitiously. Again the lifeboat ran in close, but no entreaties could induce her to leap; nearer came the boat, desperately near, and when the ship rose after the next heave a man—one of the lifeboat crew—clung to her streaming side. It was Pat Carroll! In a moment he had taken her up as if she were a child, another and he was close to the boat's side, a dozen eager hands dragging her over the gunwale. Just then a heavy sea struck the "Ariane," and the third mast went with a crash. The man uttered a cry.

No one knew how it happened, but when his comrades pulled Pat Carroll from the water into the boat he was almost unconscious, his breath coming in short, strangled gasps, his lips red with the blood that forced its way between them as he hiccoughed at intervals, his daring deed being scarcely realised for the moment because the life-boat crew were busy with their oars stemming the tide that now, surging past the "Ariane's" counter, had driven them some fathoms away from the ship on whose deck there still was life.

The Creole, her black hair streaming in the howling gale, her white skirts fluttering madly about her trembling limbs, her bare arms uplifted, signalled them to wait while she desperately strove to reach Black Jules, who was still wrenching at the useless wheel, for even at this last moment the man had not yet grasped that all was lost. What? abandon the noble ship he had known and loved so long, whose power and beauty had thrilled him many a time as he gazed upwards proudly upon the sun-smitten splendour of her snowy sails thundering and quivering into the blue of heaven! No, let them go, Florimel and the rest, they would yet hide behind each other's backs when single-handed, he lifted the "Ariane" from the sand with the rising tide and gaily cast anchor again up yonder where the great warehouses were mouldering by the deserted wharves! He did not hear the shouts from the cliff, he did not hear the Creole's cry; he heard only the sobbing of his good ship as she lay

chained in mortal agony upon the rack of the raging sea.

"He don't know what you're sayin', he's off his head," bawled the coxswain to the girl. "Catch hould of a spar or something, and jump over board in the name of God, we're dead bate an' can't do more than we're doin'; jump, I say, in the name ov God, an' lave him go to blazes!"

But the Creole, partly comprehending, shook her head, and once more despairingly signalled "wait." Then she shrieked anew to Jules, stumbling forward in his direction, the ferocious seas one after another caught her; they hurled her down, rolled her brutally across the tilted deck, buffeting her ringing ears, spitting their fury into her bleeding face, and as she reeled to her feet, blindly groping with outstretched hands, the wind sprang upon her, dashed the thick, tangled hair across her swollen eyes, and tore from her body the kilted skirt, shearing it away as if hacked off by a knife; but she reached the ruined man, and, grasping the spokes of the wheel, stared into his bloodless face, bidding him save himself, that all was lost but the chance of life.

He had picked her up in a miserable tavern at San Francisco, where she was the drunken jest of the place, and gave her a start by making her a sort of stewardess on board the "Ariane." He had been good to her, as she understood goodness, and she was grateful, for, being a disreputable person, you see, her very virtues were of the indecorous order.

She did rouse him at length, her working features, her terror-stricken eyes, her appealing tongue, struck home through the torpor of his brain, and he saw the dread reality as one sometimes may see a landscape in a lightning flash; but hope was dead in him and the fear of death. He pushed her from him savagely, and turning with uplifted arms cursed the cruel Irish seas where all his dreams had perished; he cursed the day that he was born, and the paps that gave him suck; and, as each storm-scourged avalanche crashed upon his deck, he cursed the winds of heaven and the Master of them!

Seeing that he would not leave the ship, the shuddering line of people by the lighthouse fell on their knees in groups here and there, putting up prayers for his soul, while an English soldier's voice, callous when contrasted with the guttural accents around, rang out, "'e's dyin game, by G——d!"

Yes, Black Jules was dying game.

"Young woman," shouted the coxswain, "are you mad? Don't you see he's clane cracked? Is it to keep us here all night you want? Will you ——. Oh, God, put her about, put her about, boys! Mother of Christ receive their souls!"

There was no need to repeat the order. The panting crew bent to the oars, their glistening eyes fixed instinctively on one of the appalling sights of the sea. From out the dusk a vast mountain side of green water rose, moving on, relentless amid the tumult, seeming to absorb as it came all the fret and fury

around, for the sense of the night's mad turmoil was swallowed up in the mere act of gazing at the terrible thing which continually loomed higher and closer still. One breathless moment it actually hung above the mast-denuded wreck, its wavering edge marked by a whitening line of flying spray, the heeling forms of Black Jules and the woman sharp against its shadow, and then broke, shattering the deck more surely than the strokes of a thousand axes, and whirling the lifeboat round and round and round again as if it had been a drifting spar!

That was the last of the "Ariane."

When Cambia Carty gave Smith the lie she acted on the same irresistible impulse that first bade her question him, but she had ample time for reflection while the events I have just described were taking place. As there are drugs which quicken abnormally the action of our faculties, so there are crises in our lives which stimulate the mind to an inconceivable acumen, thoughts before disjointed or disconnected fall into place seemingly of their own accord, we perceive the true proportion of things, the cogency of arguments, the validity of proofs, the inevitableness of conclusions; and then comes a pause, we think no longer, but wait with an unaccustomed sense of aloofness for the final assent of the will which, be it lightly or gravely given, shall make us responsible for what we meditate through all the ages of eternity.

Cambia had just such experiences now. She suddenly ceased to have ears or eyes for aught save

the drama being enacted upon the bar, but she watched it—seeing its least details—without a throb of human pity, its sole interest for her lying in the possibility that its incidents might give confirmation or denial to the sailor's story; and when she saw the efforts Florimel made to save the girl he bound to the mast the weight of evidence preponderated in favour of his statement, but yet she withheld her consent, though an unspeakable rage, a deadly, silent longing for violent action took her by the throat. She yearned to do something—something that she knew would leave her hand wet; yes, wet and reeking with a smell which came into her nostrils now as it came one day her father gashed his thumb badly with a knife when mending his nets. Had she thought of it she would probably have wept or screamed aloud, but the tense fury of her soul had excluded from her mind all but the one terrible desire. Her body had grown rigid and was bathed in a cold sweat, her breathing almost ceased, and were it not for the fact she was wedged in between the crowd, she would have fallen—the very face upon her had frozen into a sinister mask that was hate incarnate.

When, however, the people sank upon their knees she was thrown violently against the wall, and the shock brought her to a sense of her surroundings. She looked about instinctively for the English sailor, and saw him sitting on the curbstone, stolidly endeavouring to draw off one of his sea boots, for in clambering up among the rocks

he twisted an ankle. Cambia assisted him gently. Noah gave her a look of thanks.

"Come here," she said, seating herself beside him, "are you sure it's the first mate is the married man. Now think, there's another, isn't there?"

"Yus, if 'e aint drowned by now, 'e were on the rope with me," replied the mariner wearily, "but it's the Florimel one is married—the same as was 'ere before."

"How do you know?"

"Told me so himself; 'e was the first who sighted land. We were both in the bows at the time on the look out, an' 'e said we'd go to matchwood on the bar if we didn't try to clear, so 'e sings out to close haul the ship an' 'e takes the wheel himself, the captain bein' below——"

"Yes, drunk, go on," interjected Cambia contemptuously, as she cut away the man's woollen stocking. Noah grimaced.

"I 'avent said so," he retorted, sullenly, "there aint no good your rushin' me like that, takin' the bloomin' words out of my mouth."

"Well, sure you needn't be in such a hobble, there's no harm done; you said he was on a tare yourself."

"I said 'e weren't all there," continued Noah, with dull persistence. "But I don't suppose it matters much to you."

"Not a damn!" replied Cambia, in a sudden burst of savage frankness which belied the cajolery of her apologetic glance. "Tell us about the mate—the nice little chap."

"So I am," answered Noah, "but you needn't squeeze my bloomin' ankle so tight, it aint a babby's throttle."

Cambia paid this characteristic pleasantry the tribute of a laugh that made her dull-witted companion shiver. "Go on," she continued, recovering herself, "tell us all about it."

"Well, lass, there aint much to tell. We brought the ship close up to the wind after a bit in long shore fashion, bein' short-'anded, an' there we went, pitchin' an' tossin' an' shippin' seas like 'ell till I thot the masts would be picked clean out of her with the strain. After a while Black Jules 'e comes on deck, for the pitchin' 'ad sobered 'im, 'an he goes aft to Florimel an' takes a look round, the land bein' plain to be seen on our lee, 'an 'e asks him where 'e thot we were; but Florimel shakes 'is 'ed, stupid like, 'Blest if I know,' 'e says. Well, I was in the mizzen shrouds at the time, comin' down, an' I wondered why the little chap lied, for it's not 'ard to guess at their lingo, seein' I 'ad been in a French ship before, an' when the skipper turns to watch the land again Florimel calls me to 'im to 'elp at the wheel, an' 'e says, in 'is queer English, 'you hold tongue, see, I work 'er off, 'e try to run in, get wrecked.' Well, things went on like that for rather more 'n an 'our, aye an' two hours, an', now I think of it, three hours, sometimes we'd miss the land in the mist an' feel good, thinkin' we'd cleared it, but then, again, 'twould show a bit bigger on our quarter, an' all the time the bloomin' ship rackin' and' strainin'

every bolt in 'er, an' every now an' then the mate would give a look out of the corner of 'is eye leeward, an' keep on mutterin', 'Well, I'm blest if this 'ere's not a rummy go!' or what it means in French, while me an' 'im was wrestlin' with the wheel. After another bit I could see we were'nt makin' any 'edway, an' I could guess from the fresh thumpin' an' strainin' goin' on under hatches that all wasn't right below, so I says straight to Florimel, 'Things are gettin' adrift, we're goin' in, what are we to do?' But 'e says back, 'Pst, pst, the wind is fallin', leave it to me, I work her off, see!' You bet I didn't, though the wind did veer round a bit, an' up comes the foreign woman, just to get a breath of fresh air like, an' she works along to Jules an' says something to 'im quick an' low, an' in a flash 'e dives down the companionway. Then she got the glass an' began spyin' at the land which, do all we could, was growin' 'igher an' 'igher, an' instead of bein' off our taffrail was now abaft our beam. Presently up comes Jules in a jiffey, 'is face white, an' 'e chasin' a couple of roustabouts who slipped below in the confusion to do a little lootin'. Well, you may guess I didn't feel pretty comfortable, seein' what sort of chaps that crew were, an' 'ow they was beginnin' to smell a rat, an' I was jest goin' to speak to Florimel again when Black Jules—'e were white Jules then—whispers 'im, 'The cargo 's shifting, it will knock a hole in 'er if we don't do something,' all in French, you understand, an' before Florimel could say a word the girl she lets a screech

an' sings out to Jules, pointin' to the land an' talkin' like a machine gun. 'E grabs the glass, an' takes a long squint, an' puts it down, rubbin' 'is 'ed an' lookin' sore puzzled; but the woman, she laughs an' says something laughin' like to Florimel that I couldn't twig—'er French not bein' like their's—but 'is face gets that white with passion, an' 'e ups with 'is arm to down 'er! Then the skipper comes between them, an' they 'ad a reg'lar low down jawin' match, Jules swearin' for all, 'e bein' special savage 'cos 'e felt 'ed been 'ad by the mate—an' you'll allow it did look foolish for a captain not to know a port 'ed been in before. Well, the row lasted till the wind freshened up again, when 'e stopped short, an' takin' the wheel from Florimel, gave orders to lighten the ship—not an easy job either, with the freight goin' every which way, an' in 'e came, an' 'twould h' been a damn sight better for 'im, pore chap, if 'ed a done it afore, for there would 'ave been more water on the bar then. That's all I know about that chap Florimel, maidy, an' I aint much obliged to 'im. I don't know the rights of the fight between himself an' Jules, for 'e didn't say much, an' the skipper's voice was thick, but I shouldn't be surprised if there was a petticoat somewhere in the offin'. I do 'ope 'e 'asn't been a makin' of promises to you, lass, for 'es a tightly-wedded man by now; I see the splicin' bein' done myself in one of them toyshop churches at Naples. 'Ere, I say, what are they amoanin' for? Euchered?"

Cambia rose and looked through a rift in the

crowd caused by some of the people still on their knees.

"Yes," she said, indifferently, "I think there's no ship on the bar by this; 'tis a wonder she stood it so long; she was a grand ship, begor."

Oddly enough, the callous tone hurt Noah. He tried to get to his feet, fell back and swore heartily.

"'Ere, lend an 'and, lass," he exclaimed. "I'm a bloomin' cripple, but I want to have a last look at as fine a craft as ever I shipped in, though she was a foreigner."

To this Cambia vouchsafed no reply, but feeling she had something to do, gathered up her dripping skirts that rattled as she walked, and joined in the almost general movement now being made down the road by the crowd, eager to see the lifeboat come in. At first the people went slowly, being still vividly impressed by the fate of the gallant ship and the sudden quenching of the two lives which she bore to death; but presently the pace quickened, for the foremost stragglers had begun to cheer, having seen the boat momentarily in the glare of a rocket sent up from the grounds of a neighbouring hotel. Then a sense of the courage and coolness displayed by the gallant fellows who had risked their lives so freely in the dread scene enacted on their bar found vent in a cheer and a rush for the Mall where the lifeboat house stood; and soon the rush became a stampede by reason of the hissing storm of stinging spray which sent the crowd shivering along the wall away from the foot-path, now ankle deep with stones and sea-weed and

miniature drifts of sand. On and on the people ran, Cambia running with them. Soon they were under the comparative shelter of the hotel wall and the great elm trees adjoining, a bough from one of the latter, wrenched off by the fury of the gale, falling on the only gas lamp still alight, and snapping it short from its iron support. Now they were passing the coastguard station, now speeding down the "strand," stooping as they ran to escape the terrific hail of stones and sand and spray which raked the narrow passage along the Monks' Orchard wall, where Florimel had so often waited for Cambia Carty, and now, at last, they were debouching on the Mall, already alive with people.

What a wild, tumultuous, intoxicating scene it was under the tossing glare of a dozen naked lights that sent spluttering, flaming splotches of tar hither and thither, burning and blistering the bare, unheeding hands which held them aloft! How the crowd of people, stooping, running, jostling, pressing now on that side, now on this, went to and fro unceasingly, the light catching their glistening rain-drenched faces, their eyes, their teeth, effacing a group by its deep shadow one instant, and flinging it into blazing relief the next, while the continuous babble of laughter, cheers, exclamations, dulled even the thunder of the roaring surf. Soon, the wind brought them a thin shout from the windows of some houses looking on the sea, and this the crowd took up, pressing forward incautiously, only to recoil before the side-long sweep of the breakers that sent their hail of spray into the palpi-

tating mass as the arching fire of a supporting battery leaps forward over the hungry swords of a cavalry charge. Then, the shouts swelled into a column of sound that pierced the screaming gale, as the pitching boat showed buoyantly riding the following seas which boiled upon the gunwale again and again.

After some moments the cheers sank into a pause of expectancy. Why did they not make for the boat-house—there would be no lack of help in dragging the boat up?

There was, they could see, too, some indecision amongst the crew, and a confused murmur of voices came to their ears through the vindictive hiss of the baffled waves outside. Then the rowers, languidly jerking their feeble strokes, pulled themselves together somehow and went past. Yes, everybody understood now—they were going on to the ferry slip. But why? No matter, the water would be less broken probably; anyway there they were going—so forward to the slip! And just as the cliff road had been abandoned so was the Mall, the multitude choking the narrow street leading to the ferry, lining down the wharves, the square frontage, and the slip itself, where white tipped tongues of sea water shot upward every other instant, lapping the slimy blocks of stone as if they would tear them asunder.

"Hurrah, hurrah," yelled the people, "they're comin' at last; head her in my merry men, more power to ye?"

Yes, hurrah, for although you are only an aggre-

gation of petty shop-keepers, soldiers, fishermen, idlers—nondescript flotsam and jetsam of an Irish seaport town—yet to-night you have caught the true significance of valour—the valour which faces death quietly, gallantly, with a smile in the eye, for neither gain nor praise, but only for the sake of our common brotherhood, and our common nature.

And thus it was that men who a moment ago would have cheated or lied to gain some squalid advantage in the exercise of their squalid trades now rushed recklessly into the boiling surf, forgetful of everything but the desire to give expression to that admiration for brave and simple deeds which sometimes lifts us out of ourselves and the petty interests of our petty lives.

The cheering swelled in volume and increased in violence; it ran like wildfire down the wharves; it set windows looking on the square aflutter with handkerchiefs, and through it pealed the hysterical laughter of women, who, hugging the children in their arms closer and closer, vowed the cruel sea should have naught to do with them when they were men!

In the crush Cambia suddenly found herself at her father's side. Turning, he caught the expression on her face under the torch-light, and taking one of her arms, locked it under one of his own.

"Wisha, isn't it awful—the poor devils," he remarked. "Begor, 'tis the unlucky town for 'em!"

Cambia thought it would be for one of them, but

she only said, "'Tis so, then; did you see Pat Carroll, father?"

"No, indeed; is he in town, girl?"

"He is, so; I saw him a while ago," replied Cambia, who was fast maturing a plan of revenge upon Florimel in which Carroll should figure as the vindicator of injured innocence.

"Is it Patsey Carroll, ye're talkin' about?" queried Tim Casy, who was nursing his injured arm beside them. "Sure he's in the lifeboat with the boys. He took my place, an' he's pullin' stroke or ought to be anyway," he added, as the boat came on amid a whirlwind of cheers.

"Begor, I wouldn't doubt him!" cried Old Tim heartily.

"Good business he was doin'," muttered Cambia.

The boat was now under the projecting shelter of the wharf, and it was noticed that one of the oars was missing as she was being dragged bodily up the slip by men who rushed waist deep into the surf to meet her, a veritable tornado of cheers bursting forth, the crowd straining on tip-toe and craning their necks over one another's shoulders to get a glimpse at the men in the boat, who still sat at their oars strangely quiet through it all.

The cheers presently died away, and were replaced by a murmuring of voices that spread along from the slip—low, indistinct at first, then sharp and high, men looking in each other's faces and asking, "What's up?"

"Keep back, for the love of God!" cried Tim

Casy, "an' don't be crushin'; don't ye see the man's hurt mortial bad? He's dyin'."

"Who?" hissed Cambia, a fierce hope in her heart.

"Patsey Carroll," then replied Casy more softly.

"How did it happen, at all, at all?" gasped Old Tim.

"I don't rightly know, begor," replied the man who sat next Pat, "but it was when the woman here—the Frenchman's wife—was afraid to leave the ship, you know, an' he got on board an' was takin' her off, an' the mast gave, or somethin', an' it hit him when he was comin' over the side an' she in his arms. I wasn't noticin' much at the time, but that's how it happened, I think, an' he didn't speak a word ever since."

A new babble now burst forth, the tale of Pat's heroism, imperfectly understood, passing from mouth to mouth amid a chorus of exclamations and a rain of eager questioning.

"Hold ye're tongues, will ye, for the love of the Mother of God!" screamed the coxswain, standing up in the boat, his arms extended, "sure the man will die between ye. Get a door an' put him on it; sure I saw what happened to my poor man, an' I tell ye ye haven't a minute to lose!"

"Run up to my shop," cried an authoritative voice—the voice of Old Tim, who was standing at the boat's prow—"an' take off the door; it's not locked, an' they're only socket an' staple hinges, an' lave someone go for the priest an' the doctor. Cambia, run up, girl, an' prepare the place, an'

maybe, with the help of God, things won't be so bad, after all."

Cambia, feeling her programme should be altered, obeyed him, reluctantly preceding the men who offered to go for the door, while a doctor who happened to be present pushed forward through the crowd to where Pat Carroll lay amid a confusion of oilskins, looking upward patiently. There was a pause, the throng became very quiet, a hedge of people standing silently along the edge of the wharf above the slip watching the physician—an ominous look on his face as he made a superficial examination of the wounded man, the sobbing of Florimel's Italian wife and the constant crash of the breakers on the Waterford side filling the interval. Presently the men who had gone with Cambia returned bearing the door, and on this rude litter, the coxswain's coat folded under his head, Pat Carroll was borne to Tim Carty's above the heads of the crowd that would have cheered him to the echo if, with the subtle insight of the Celtic temperament, the people did not feel human applause to be sadly inappropriate now.

Some of the rescued sailors followed stupidly in the fitful glare of the torches.

Cambia Carty met the pitiful little procession, her figure outlined against the brilliantly-lighted background of the kitchen, the fire of hell in her heart, its flames shining in her sullen eyes. Behind her stood a priest, the gilt on his purple stole glistening fitfully. Stepping aside she permitted the staggering men and their burden to enter; her

father, the doctor, and one or two of the rescued crew followed. Another man, supporting a woman, came slowly in their wake. It was M. Florimel. He really had no idea of whither he went, but seeing fire and light before him instinctively sought them.

As he put his foot on the threshold Cambia let the sail which had been hastily hung across the open doorway fall.

"Where are you goin'?" she said simply.

M. Florimel, grasping the situation, paused irresolutely. His wife's head fell languidly against his shoulder; he passed his arm in a distinctly marital fashion around her waist. The people hung back and made a semi-circle around them. M. Florimel plucked courage from despair.

"Pardon me, Cambie," he said, quietly, "but your father was so kind to me when I was here that my feet took me to his door of themselves."

This was pretty, considering it had been uttered on the spur of the moment, but Cambia disregarded the flag of truce. She laughed cruelly.

"Yes, indeed," she replied, "no wonder your legs run away with you, 'tis the unfortunate man you are. Sure you didn't know where you were goin' half this day! Begor, 'tis a queer sailor you are intirely not to know Youghal, though the light-house was starin' you in the face an' the road behind it!"

Interest sprang into the eyes of the crowd. Cambia's tone promised something to come; her manner implied generous and impersonal indignation.

"Cambie," said M. Florimel, a little confused, "I do not know what you mean, I cannot talk to you now, I am hurt," pointing to his head, whence the blood was slowly and persistently trickling down his right cheek. "I will explain to-morrow. What have I done that you speak so?"

"Oh, Mister Florimel," said Cambia, calmly, "I don't want to talk to you to-morrow, I want to talk to you now. Mother of God give me patience. You did not do anything to me? No, indeed, Mister Florimel, for how could you?" this with a glance whose insolent significance struck M. Florimel like a blow in the face, "but I want to tell you that you did more than if you killed me with a sword. There's a man inside there who was bred an' born here, whom everyone knew runnin' about the place; a man that was like a brother to me who never had one, an' he asked me to marry him a month ago an' I said——yes"—the pause of suspension was admirable—"an' Mister Florimel he'll never get up from that bed inside, for I heard the doctor say his back was broken, an', Mister Florimel, it's all through you."

A murmur of pity rose from the crowd.

"Yes," resumed Cambia, with a wan smile, "he an' I were to be married, an' he broke his back this night trying to save that woman on your arm, an' he needn't have lost his life if you only came into port when you sighted land."

Here M. Florimel made a great mistake. He did not understand that histrionic talent is not uncommon amongst Cambia's class in Ireland, and

he mistook the mournful cadences of her voice for an expression of deep, regretful emotion which left no room for any resentment against himself. Experience had taught him that in conjunctures of the kind skilful flattery was never amiss, and M. Florimel believed he could fool the cleverest woman alive. He had not yet the faintest suspicion of all her words implied. He relinquished his wife to a by-stander, and went up to the girl—

"Cambie," he said, "there is no one who mourn more sorrowfully the brave man who hurt himself going to save my Terisina. It is not the first time the Irish help the French. Ah, me, no! But I am desolated when you say it is your man also! It make me weep and wish I was nevair born. Ah, if I could make him live by dying myself I would do it. But *que voulez vous*? It was the will of the good God. He knows best."

"Much you know about it!" muttered a fisherman between his teeth.

"Oh, wisha, why didn't you come in?" sobbed Cambia, her apron to her eyes, her shoulders heaving convulsively. M. Florimel took a step nearer.

"Ask your own heart," he murmured. "I knew you would forget me—that you were only amusing yourself with me—and when I despaired of winning you, for you never meant to marry me, I married the first woman I met. I did not ever hope to see you again, and when to-day I saw the land I try hard to go away, for I no more wanted to behold the star I lift my eyes to, and that laugh at me! I was afraid."

"What!" exclaimed Cambia, her hands clenched at her sides, blank amazement depicted on her face, "afraid of me! Wisha, why, for God's sake? What truck or barter had I with you? I who was to be marrid to that man inside? Mind what you're sayin'; think of a better lie. Pat Carroll can't rise an arm now, but I have a father—a father that won't lave me be insulted? Oh, Mother of God!" she continued, abandoning the anadiplosis for the apostrophe, "look down on us this blessed night, to think a thing callin' himself a man should have power to send a fine ship to the bottom of the cold sea with his foolery! Oh, why, why didn't you come in? Sure whatever you did in this town—an' I'm thinkin' you did something you're afraid of—that was no reason to send all them souls before their God? Oh, man, man, have you a conscience in you at all, at all? 'Tis you wrecked the ship, an' drowned the poor fool of a man who trusted you. Oh, sure whoever you made a fooleen of here, or whatever you did, you had no right to commit murder, for a murderer you are so sure as there is a God in heaven, an' you'll have to answer for it!"

A low murmur broke along the crowd—the sentiments were popular, and Cambia was playing to the gallery.

Florimel's cheek paled. He could have bitten his tongue in two. He felt there was just sufficient truth in what she said to cause question and comment when this scene would be related through the town. He did not know how she had got her infor-

mation, but he saw that in the face of such accusations, though imperfectly understood by the crew, some defence should be made, for if the matter were taken up it might lead to an inquiry and to all manner of terrible possibilities. Moreover, he was at a disadvantage, his accustomed aplomb having forsaken him in the stress and excitement of the night, so that, although as consummate a liar as Cambia herself, he now sadly lacked that readiness of invention and that simple yet studied continuity of narrative so necessary to the success of a lie. A sense, too, of fathomless duplicity, the treachery, the malevolence of his enemy unnerved him, a gulf seemed suddenly to yawn at his feet; he perceived tardily the sinister trend of the rhetorical display, and he felt she would ruin him if she could do so with impunity, for he had discernment enough to see how cunningly she masked her rage against himself by real or affected concern for Carroll. One course remained; it was to provoke her if possible into a display of violent passion which might be instrumental in revealing their true relations to the crowd; but he hesitated to take it, the sympathies of the people being undoubtedly on her side. He temporised. Looking round the circle of hostile faces, he said as calmly as he could

"She does not know what she says. I have nothing to fear here. I am a Frenchman, an hon'r'ble man. I did my duty. I knew the ship would go to pieces at low water on the bar—ver' well, it did. How can I help the sea? No, I am not here to defend myself; I am not on my trial."

"No; but begor you soon may be," cried Cambia, her arms akimbo. "Was it low water at twelve o'clock to-day, I say? I'm a liar. Well, perhaps so, though you're the first said it; but what were you when Mr. Laforge asked you where you thought ye were, an' you told him you didn't know, though you did damn well all the time? Answer me that, you cowardly hound."

Stung by the roar of approval which followed this statement, principally because it was vituperative, M. Florimel did answer by stepping closer and hissing a brutal insult into Cambia's face. It nearly cost him his life. Unslipping her fury with a blasphemy that should have blistered her lips, the girl sprang away, snatching at her skirts, the meaner spirited among the crowd pressing forward in hopes of witnessing some frantically indecent act, but M. Florimel understood the gesture. Falling back he cried—"Hold her, she has a knife in her garter!" But, luckily for him, Cambia's hands were empty; still her movement was a strange one for an Irish girl, though possibly Cambia's mother could have explained.

In answer to the mate's exclamation one or two men interposed; their touch acted like a spur on Cambia Carty. Flinging them aside as if they had been children, she silently sprang upon Florimel, and before the onlookers had realised it had buried her little, sinewy fingers in his throat, while the Italian woman shrieked with a new terror. The crowd surged delightedly around the struggling group, for Florimel was clutching madly at the

girl's wrists, though he might as well have tugged at one of the iron rings in the wall below. He spun round again and again, endeavouring to trip or shake off his opponent; but she kept her hold tenaciously, her mouth set, her brows one straight line above her pitiless eyes that looked murder into his. M. Florimel's knees began to weaken; there was a drumming at his temples, a rushing in his ears, the blood trickled from his nostrils, his mouth opened and shut spasmodically, his eyes protruded horribly.

He was a strong man and a brave one as men go, but he was being slowly choked to death by a girl, and in little more time than it takes to write this the soul would have been wrenched from his writhing body if a hand had not fallen upon Cambia's shoulder, and Old Tim's stentorian voice thundered out—

"Let him go, girl! What is he doin' to you?"

"Wisha, not much," gasped Cambia, recovering herself and feeling that murder might be an expensive luxury, "only 'tis through him an' his ——there Pat Carroll's a dyin' man to-night."

Old Tim looked at her steadily a moment, and then said, "Go inside, he's askin' for you; he wants to speak to you."

Cambia obeyed. Her father paused, and then advanced towards Florimel, as if he would speak to him, but before he could do so the French mate had sunk down fainting in his wife's arms.

On re-entering the house Cambia saw, stretched upon a pile of netting, the form of Pat Carroll, but

his face was hidden from her by the stooping shoulders of the priest, who had just finished his ministrations. Grotesque as are the claims of the Irish clergy to that political and social supremacy they are striving so recklessly to obtain, yet they still show bravely by the bed of death, where there is only a fainting soul to be cheered on its way through the dark valley, and not a conscience to be bullied nor a vote to be filched.

Cambia approached on tip-toe, but Pat caught the sound of her footfall. The priest, following the light in his expectant eyes, looked round. There was silence in the little room for a while, the few rescued seamen huddled by the fire staring at the scene with uncomprehending gaze.

"Cambia," said Pat in a changing voice, "come over an' bid me good-bye, girl."

She approached, holding out her hand.

"I tried to do what I could for you, Cambia," he continued, taking it, "an' I hope I saved your man. I didn't ever see him, but I guessed he'd be in the ship, for why wouldn't he, comin' back to claim you, an' I hope ye'll be happy together; but sometimes think of me an' pray for me, won't you, girl?"

"I'll never forget you, Pat," replied Cambia, making that promise which comes so glibly to our lips by the death-bed, when we know so surely we shall forget, and sobbing from a mere revulsion of feeling.

"It's very good of God to take me now," he went on, after another slight pause, "for if I lived

I'd often be lonesome, thinkin' of you, an' maybe envyin' him."

The expression on Cambia's face was not pleasant to see.

"There was no livin' man, Pat," she said in a burst of genuine emotion, "I ever knew who was worth your little finger, much less your life, my poor fellow!"

"Oh, yes," answered Pat, "the man you chose. But, Cambia, dear, don't forget me intirely in your happiness, remember we were children together, we who once were children together. Isn't there a piece of poetry about that, girl? You read it out of the paper for meself an' the father one Sunday after Mass. I learned it off because I thought it's the way I'd think of you if you died—

"But oft when the sunset gates at even
Shimmer all crimson and golden barred,
I think of you in that shining heaven
Whose floor is the firmament planet starred;
And out of my life's December weather
I pray ye to guard my lonely years,
Till we who once were children together
Shall meet in the country that knows no tears."

There was more, too, but my mind is gettin' blind an' I can't find the words I want."

"Don't mind 'em, Pat," said Cambia, who had no weakness for poetry, "think of where you're goin'."

"I thought of it often," replied the dying man, "an' I'm not afraid."

He leaned back, his eyes closed, a great calm on his face. His life had been a short one, but,

unlike many short lives, there were few things to regret in it. He, half illiterate fisherman as he was, represented the best and noblest type of Irish manhood. There was almost as little in common between him and Danny Cogan or Old Tim as if they had been inhabitants of different spheres. He was the product of events rather than of years—a type of a gradually increasing body of his countrymen who have learned to think and to be silent. Sobbing still, Cambia sank down on her knees beside him, Old Tim, who had just come in, following her example.

"He's going," said the priest softly, "let us say the 'Litany for the Dying'!"

"Wait a minute, sir," gasped Cambia, rising, "I forgot to light the blessed candle, an' put it in his hand. He'll soon know all about me an' the Frenchman," she thought, with a queer twist of Celtic mysticism, "but he'll know, too, I did something for his soul at the end, though I did make a fool of him."

She was neither a sentimentalist nor a mystic, but she had a vague, half-hearted belief that the things she heard in the "chapel," and the exquisite myths of her race with which she was familiar, might after all have some truth in them, and she took the off chance. She placed the lighted taper in the relaxing hand, on which she closed her own, and knelt down again, the seamen by the fire following her example. Presently the three Irish voices rose in the prayer for the dying, lifting and falling in unison like minature waves

of sound breaking upon the mist-hidden borders of eternity.

In the middle of the Litany Pat opened his eyes wide, a new light in them, and stared down at the golden crown of Cambia's bowed head. She looked up. She had been thinking—truly a strange thought for her—how base and mean the petty things of her life had been, how ignoble her duplicity and her hate, the thought was reflected in her face.

"Cambia," said Pat, in a clear, distinct voice, "I never saw you like that before; are you ashamed of anything? I'm goin' fast an' I know it, but there's things I want to ask you an' I have no time. I wonder will we ever meet again?"

"To be sure you will," cried the priest, promptly, "it's only like going from one room into another."

The fisherman's glazing eyes sought his a second time and then turned to Cambia's tear-wet face. "If we do, Cambia," he resumed, "I wonder will we know each other. I wonder will you be the same Cambia or someone else I mistook for you?"

Cambia was silent, not being accustomed, as I have hinted, to consider abstract problems. Feeling the pause to be an interrogative one, and finding the girl did not reply, they looked for Pat to speak again, but he in turn was silent, too, and before the watchers could realise what had happened, his great soul had gone out on the night wind to join its peers.

There is little left to add, and I have hardly heart to tell it. No investigation concerning the loss of the "Ariane" took place as M. Florimel dreaded, though he experienced some difficulty in getting another ship, for Cambia's charges had borne fruit in ugly rumours of incapacity and negligence.

Next day the body of Black Jules was found upon the beach, face upwards, staring into the pale blue of a cloudless September morning, and around one gigantic arm a bracelet of woman's hair. It did not belong to the Creole or any of her kind, but had been knotted there by his little Gascon wife on their wedding night, the little wife who at that moment, mayhap, was soothing their child with a song of ships and the sea in their home by the winding Adour.

He was not a very estimable person, this Black Jules, but he never forsook a friend or forgot a favour. Pagan virtues? Yes, if you will, though I have known some Christians who would have been the better for possessing them.

"*Bocca bacciata non perde ventura*" holds good in Ireland as well as elsewhere, provided the *bocca bacciata* guards a discreet tongue, and Cambia Carty was never a babbler. She lost no social status on account of her "flirtation" with Florimel so skilfully had she discounted anything he might say about her during his short stay in Youghal—and he chose to hold his peace—her attack upon him being accepted by the public as simply a proof of her uncontrollable grief at the death of Pat

Carroll, whom everybody told everybody else she loved with the most passionate ardour.

Time, the consoler, did his work, however, better than usual in her case, for after a judicious interval—some eight or nine months—she quietly married Mat Corrigan, an extremely respectable man, and the most successful grabber in his county, presenting him in due course with twins, named respectively, Peter and Paul. Peter, I understand, is destined for the sacerdotal profession, and Paul will receive a legal training—presumably with a view to a patriotic, Parliamentary career. Cambia's golden hair is changing to a dirty, serviceable drab, and her figure is flattening out in the usual fashion—she is now "just like anyone else," as she says herself. Indeed, she never was otherwise. She thinks of Pat, the fisherman, "poor crayture," at times, condescendingly, as becometh the wife of a strong farmer, and even sometimes mutters a comfortable "God pity him" as she drives from Mass on her new side car o' Sundays.

Well, an' sure 'tis good to do that same?

"DOOLAN'S VENDETTA."

THIS is an Irish story, though it does not deal either with politics or polemics; therefore, serious people who wish to understand the Irish question and persons possessing an object in life may pass it by—it has no mission and no moral.

The scene is laid in Cork. Now Cork is the finest city in all Ireland, its streets are the cleanest, its inhabitants the most earnest, the most reliable, and the most public-spirited in the Island of Saints. They are also of royal descent. If this latter characteristic does not strike you spontaneously it will be brought under your notice by Corkonians themselves, should you be ever lucky enough to get into society there and mix with the upper ten.

By upper ten I do not mean to imply comparison. In Cork all circles are upper, the difference is only in degree; there is no lower class. The charwoman who conscientiously beats your carpet to rags and thriftily sweeps the dust into your drawingroom corners has a soaring soul, as you will quickly find if you supply her with a sufficiency of Murphy's porter—the popular solvent for the chains of the spirit. The artisan who genially cheats you out of his quarter or half-day cherishes thoughts above the dull, mechanic trade to which fate has condemned him, and proudly recalls the vanished

glories of Brian the Brave. It is, however, hardly necessary to add that all this "goes" with perfervid sentiments concerning the equality of man and the surpassing beauty of republican institutions.

Cork society proper is exceedingly exclusive. It it, perhaps, the most intensely aristocratic even in this kingly nation, and to win an easy entrance within its hallowed portals you must be a foreigner, or, what is of more consequence, look like one. The army is much sought after, lieutenants being at a premium, while militia and Constabulary officers are constantly utilised. Indeed, the seventh heaven of Corkonian ambition is situated in the vicinity of a barrack.

The usual mode of progression to this Hy Brazil is for the ordinary aspirant both arduous and painful. As a general rule such a one begins life on the coal quay, an airy thoroughfare in constant touch with the neighbouring police court, thence he is transplanted to Sunday's Well, a charming suburb, quite continental in appearance, where everybody is in a nervous state of transition; thence, after many days, he moves tremblingly on to St. Luke's, the final goal, which is not at all continental in appearance, but rather quite English you know, the east wind and the tasteful uniforms of His Majesty's infantry of the line aiding the pleasant illusion.

Mr. Patrick Doolan, formerly marine store keeper on the classic coal quay, had passed through these successive planes, and had at last, after years of patient endeavour, been accorded a corner on the

very outskirts of society. One of his sons was a doctor most considerately practising in Zanzibar, the other was a priest, who would have been a perfect miracle of eloquence if his words were as thoroughly pronounced as his views, while his only daughter, Mollie, a girl with a beautiful face and an astounding accent, was on the eve of being wedded to one of the Vansittart-Coogan family, a gentleman who, but for the trifling imperfections of being an utter fool and a confirmed drunkard, was the greatest "catch" in Cork.

The match had, of course, provoked furious opposition from Mr. Coogan's relatives, an aunt who was by marriage a Sullivan-O'Sullivan, and, of course, a descendant of the great Earl, cabling from Melbourne that the very notion of such a "'coming down' made the blood of Bear and Bantry freeze in her veins, and the Geraldine current to boil with irrepressible indignation!" But the young man was not to be put off once he was assured that old Doolan, otherwise "Rags and Bones," had "de coin," and was promptly accepted by Miss Doolan, who knew quite well what she was doing, but argued, from her point of view rightly, that since there was little to choose between him and her other suitors, who were by no means so "respectable," she might as well be gorgeous, all other things being equal.

Old Doolan should have been content, but was not. The social aspirations had all been the property of Mrs. Doolan, whom he had married when she was a plump little "drisheen" seller in the

English market. He was a thick-hided animal himself, and cared nothing for the rebuffs he endured in his upward way, but every studied affront, every vulgar impertinence of which his wife was the recipient rankled in his breast, and he thirsted for revenge—this agreeable emotion being, perhaps, the one thing constant in the Celtic character. If you long for eternal remembrance among Celts do not confer a favour; they are painfully normal in the art of forgetting such things, but inflict an injury, and you may rest assured your name will be a household word from generation to generation.

"Lave 'em go to hell with their aristocracy," exclaimed Mr. Doolan in a loud voice the night before the marriage, addressing his old friend and crony, Thady Dempsey, as he strove to focus that gentleman's multiplying face across the massive mahogany table. "What were dey all wanst, but no better than you or me?"

"A damn sight worse, some of 'em!" assented Mr. Dempsey, his nose in his tumbler.

"An' look at me now, an' where's the differ I ax you? Me two sons are gentlemen an' me daughter a lady!"

"That's English, be jakers," assented Mr. Dempsey, again reaching for the decanter.

"An' I ax you is it just, fair, right, or available to salvation that me wife should be known among 'em as"—he lowered his voice—"Thripe?"

"'Tis a damn shame!" replied Mr. Dempsey, making forlorn attempts to pick up a lump of sugar with the corkscrew.

"Do it wid yer fingers an' attend to me!" interjected the host. "Is that a proper name for 'em to give her, a woman who gave 'em many a hearty feed in this very room, an' filled 'em up after with wine an' whisky until, men an' women of 'em, they could hardly walk down them steps outside?"

"Yes, an' be takin' ye off afther," remarked the comforter, elaborately licking the spoon with which he had stirred his punch.

"Takin' us off, is it?" roared Mr. Doolan. "Why, then, be my sowl, I saw many of 'em with their legs under this table, an' they couldn't take themselves off, an' you may tell 'em so when you meet 'em!"

"Oh, wisha, 'tisn't poor angashores like me they'd be mixin' with," observed the sympathetic Dempsey, humbly.

"Yerrah, yer good enough for 'em," shouted his host, a little mollified, nevertheless. If you are playing the part of a social mat it is probably a consolation to know that your position is considered by someone in the light of a distinction. "But what was I sayin'? Oh, yes, I want to get even wid those devils, an' Thady, I want you to help me."

"I'm game," cheerfully declared that gentleman, pouring out fresh whisky. "But if you cross 'em won't they disown ye for ever?"

"Yerrah, what do I care about dat? Lave 'em! Me sons are gentlemen, an' me daughter as good as marrid to the best of 'em. 'Tis their affair, not our's. Lave me tell you—sure the other night I

come home, an' when I was goin' upstairs, goin' to go to bed, who should I see but Maggie an' she sittin' on the sofy, an' she crying, an' her clothes all opened; she was in evenin' dress, save the mark!"

"An' damn fine she looks, too," commented the guest. "A grand sthand of a woman!"

"Yeh, Maggie, says I, what's the matter wid ye girl? An' I went an' sat down beside her, an' put me arrum about her waist like. 'Oh, oh, don't do that,' says she, an' she let a screech just as if I hurt her. 'What's up, eroo?' says I, thinkin' 'twas a new fashion, an' thryin' to catch on. God help me. But she med no answer, an' kept on cryin'. 'Sure they weren't callin' you "Thripe" to-night?' says I. 'Oh, no,' say she, 'they don't call me that ever since you went security for Dinny Croneen, an' ped up when he ran away with the company's money, at laste, the Croneens don't, but I'm tired of me life!' Well, to be sure, I wasn't surprised, for that's all the touch now. You must be tired of life an' livin', an' ready to give it all up like a conundrum at a moment's notice. So says I, 'If that's all, be as tired of your life as you like in society, but lave us have a little biteen of life at home, an' give us a kiss, an' lave 'em go to pot!' But she gave another screech. 'In the name of commo n sinse, woman,' says I, 'what is it?' 'Oh,' says she, 'it's the stays, Paddy. I can't stand 'em. I had to take 'em off the very minit I kem in! I can't keep it up any longer, a woman of my years and weight. Look at me waist if you

don't believe me wurrds!' Well, sir, I med an examination—just like a docthor would, you know ——"

"Och, of course—yer own wife, yerrah," remarked Mr. Dempsey, waving his hand permissively. "Go on."

"An' would you believe it? I thought 'twas cut in two she was! Well, I caught the thing, 'twas lying on the sofy, an' I thrun it down the stairs. 'Oh, don't do that,' says she, 'it's a five-guinea corset, an' 'twas sint direct from Paris for me spechul.' 'If 'twas fifty guineas worth,' says I back to her, 'an' if it was sint from Paradise I won't lave it come next or near you until you're me widow.' So then she began to bawl again, an' I comforted her. 'Think of me,' she says, 'an' I eighteen stone nearly, an' that eighteen inches! An' all for what?' she screeches, 'to have the honour an' glory of sayin' I was in it at Mrs. Ferguson-Delay's party, an' have the pleasure of havin' Mrs. Peggy Coogan, the mother of me son-in-law that's goin' to be, ask did I think the Cork drisheens were as nice as they used to be. Oh, I'm livin' a miserable life,' says she, 'my meals don't do me any good, an' every time I put on one of the blaggard dresses without any bodies to 'em I feel fit to sink into the ground. Do what I can, I'm never comfortable ondressed—I'm cold. Though the others are as bad as me.' 'Yes, an' worse,' says I, 'the skinny things, without any excuse at all.' So then she began to laugh, an' when I got her into good humour again. 'Can't you give it

up?' says I. 'The childun are setttled now, an' can't you an' me buy a nice little box of a house at Blackrock or Sunday's Well, an' make our sowls, an' have some pleasure out of life? 'Twill be the ruination of you to be goin' on like this.' 'So I would,' says she, 'only first I'd like to be revinged on the lot of 'em. I'd like to make a laffin' stock of 'em before Cork. I'd like to beat the sneerin' hussies while I could keep me hand over 'em, an' lave 'em look for satisfaction in the police court after!' 'Well, upon me sweet sowl,' says I, 'you'll have satisfaction or I'm a Dutchman.' An' with dat I began to tell her a plan that was runnin' in me head this week past, for it isn't to-day or yesterday they began their blagardin', an' she clapped her hands on her sides to keep 'em from burstin' with laffin'. 'Oh, Patsey,' says she, 'yer the divil out of hell! Do it, an' me blessin' an' me sweetest kisses on ye!"

"Och, begob, thrust you for gettin' even!" remarked Mr. Dempsey, who had punctuated the foregoing anecdote with many sympathetic snorts, as he now prepared to mix himself another brew. The host swallowed his own at a gulp, and then was about to replenish his glass, but catching sight of Thady's more than half full of whisky, paused.

"Thady," he said huskily, "what's that? You'll be havin' 'em again, sure as death! Didn't you promise the priest you wouldn't take more'n two glasses of whisky in the day?"

"So I did, me bhoy," returned the other, grinding the sugar in the bottom of the tumbler with the

bowl of his spoon, "but isn't a tumbler a glass in every civilised country? An' as he didn't say anything about the size of the glass, good luck to him, I'm free to choose me measure. An' any way, 'tis another day altogether we're havin, I think, since I mixed the last."

Doolan glanced tentatively at the imperturbable clock over the fire-place, but failed to extract significance from its mildly reproachful face. "Begob, you're right," he said at a venture, "an' that reminds me I ought to be tellin' you the saycret. Can ye dhrive?"

"Like a juke."

"Well, we're goin' to have a pic-nic to-morrow after the weddin', an' I want you to take Jerry Cogan's place. He'll go, too, but I can't trust him; he'd be too much afraid of the quality, an' I want you to dhrive 'em wherever they like in the big brake. It's the last journey they'll have in it. Twig all that happens, hand out the hamper, watch 'em opening it, an' then scoot back like blazes, an' have a bit of dinner wid me an' the missus at Leeche's, the house'll be upside down. Listen here, then." And in husky whispers, broken by many chuckles, Mr. Doolan unfolded his cherished project.

Next morning the marriage between Miss Mollie Doolan and Mr. David Vansittart-Coogan was duly solemnised, being followed by a splendid breakfast, where champagne and eloquence were on tap. This function over, and the rice thrown after the departing couple, Mr. Doolan announced that as it had

always appeared to him a poor way of enjoying oneself to begin a day by pleasure and end with business, he would feel immensely obliged if the distinguished company which had so far honoured his child's nuptials would condescend to use his poor "waggonette" and permit themselves to be transported to any scene of interest they might select, where he trusted they would do justice to the lunch provided in the hamper Mrs. Doolan had packed with her own hands. This proposal was graciously greeted with acclamation, and ten minutes later Mr. Doolan watched his waggonette glorified by the flower of Cork aristocracy depart in style, the disguised Thady taking the corners in a way which wrung a cheer from the inevitable crowd of idlers in the vicinity.

"There they go," remarked Mr. Doolan to his spouse, who was still dabbing away maternal tears with an abbreviated pocket handkerchief. "There they go, as nate a set of jackeens an' 'thuckas' as ye'd meet in a summer's day, an' be my word they'll remimber 'Thripe' to the end of their lives. God grant 'twill rain."

The waggonette swept gallantly away, its illustrious occupants in riotously high spirits, Mr. Doolan's champagne aiding native wit, and as they went they praised old "Rags and Bones" for having done the thing so handsomely in the first place, and, in the second, for having refrained from inflicting his society on them. The details of the wedding breakfast were passed in review, and quite an unexpected fund of amusement was discovered in

the mimicking of their host's peculiarities of manner and speech, while his wife's solecisms were not forgotten. The fact that Mrs. Doolan referred to a distinguished military order of old days as "knights hostlers" was duly pointed out by Mr. Creedle, a young and eminent butter merchant, nor was it forgotten by Mrs. Ferguson-Delay that Mr. Doolan had described the vehicle in which they were luxuriously journeying as "accomodacious," while Miss Laura Cummin, the eldest of the three Cummin sisters, reminded the company that Mrs. Doolan, who was suspected of harbouring Nationalist ideas, invariably spoke of a disinterested nation not a hundred miles away as "perfidious Album."

Thus they bowled merrily along the North Mall, and climbed the weary hill leading to Sunday's Well, enjoying immensely the curious stares of the surburban quid-nuncs, and keeping up a perpetual fire of local allusions, which they sometimes explained for the benefit of Mr. Athelstan Wakenbarth, an Englishman connected with the Administration, a young man with a chronically puzzled air and a patient face. Sunday's Well was soon left behind, and they were again speeding on the road by the Lee, before it occurred to anyone to ask their ultimate destination. On the point being raised most of the ladies were understood to be in favour of "Lone Gougane Barra, where the Allua of songs rushes forth like an arrow," until someone in a lucid interval suggested that as the celebrated spot was over forty miles

away it might be more convenient to halt at one less distant. The discussion was proceeding vigorously when the intelligent foreigner asked timidly the name and use of an immense building they were then slowly passing. He was informed that it was a lunatic asylum. The door leading into the grounds of that rapidly-growing establishment being open, he unguardedly expressed a mild surprise at its huge proportions and was instantly told by Mr. Percy O'Grady, a gentleman at large, that it was all owing to Parnellism, but Mr. Delay, a young man in spectacles and liquor, took a different view, and pointed out that its apparent size was owing to the policy of bundling in there all the harmless fools of the surrounding districts, instead of allowing them to roam the country at their own sweet will—a statement which evidently gave the thoughtful Saxon food for reflection, and caused some of the gentlemen to glance nervously at the spectacled informant.

Possibly owing to that mental phenomenon known as "association of ideas," the conversation now shifted to an amusing law-suit concerning the newly-erected municipal buildings, whose fissured walls must remain for many a long day eloquent witnesses of the high standard of public probity obtaining in the faire citie. Most of the company held that, everything considered, the ratepayers had nothing to complain of, and Mr. Costigan-Croneen, brother to the defaulting Dinny, proposed the perfectly natural corollary that any one

who had been swindled, and who afterwards applied to the law for redress, should be fined, "for being such a mug, d'ye see."

Again the question where to halt cropped up, and the discussion resulting grew rapidly warmer than even the broiling weather, the Englishman endeavouring to effect a diversion by lavish admiration of the views unfolding themselves on every side, until he was snappishly asked had he ever been in Cumberland. Because the cachet of *ne plus ultra* Corkonian society is a profound contempt for all things Irish.

On bowled the waggonette, the illustrious occupants gradually losing that gaiety which La Veuve Cliquot so readily inspires. Mrs. Vansittart-Coogan, who had accompanied the party as queen of the revels, had already snubbed two of the Cummin girls, whom she accused of making faces at her, the one Hartigan-Bennett looked daggers at the two Hartigan-Colmans, a bitter feud existing between those historic families, and poor Mrs. Pennyfeather-O'Lynn, who had gone to sleep, now woke up weeping dismally because she explained Mr. Creedle's profile reminded her of her first husband.

It was past noon. The sweltering horses, urged remorselessly by Thady, all ears to what was transpiring, had borne them far into the bowels of the land, and would have continued to do so if Mrs. Vansittart-Coogan had not seized the reins of leadership in her character of mother of the bridegroom, and proclaimed a halt on a lonely hill-side,

commanding a sun-dappled valley which would have called forth vociferous applause—had it been in Cumberland.

A field some little way up was selected for the lunch. It was closed by a padlocked gate, but Mr. Creedle had the padlock off in a twinkling, and ere long the white table-cloth of tradition was spread upon the green grass.

Meanwhile, the disguised Thady and the innocent Jerry were opening the immense hamper which had been brought in the waggonette. Layer after layer of straw was removed amid breathless silence and a cardboard box was lifted out. Opening it hastily, Mr. Creedle drew forth a long glistening object, resembling faintly one of those sand bags with which our ancestors were accustomed to keep out draughts.

"A drisheen, by the powers!" shouted Mr. O'Grady, and a roar of laughter followed the announcement.

"How very thoughtful," sneered Mrs. Ferguson-Delay, "but where is the tripe?"

"Perhaps it is here," answered Mr. Creedle, extracting another box. It contained an admirably simulated *paté* in sawdust. On top was a card addressed to Mrs. Delay, expressing a hope that it would remind her of her grandfather "the Bantry spoilstick."

Women are proverbially cruel as well as aristocratic, and I grieve to say that the ladies present could hardly stifle their appreciation of this bitter pleasantry, for the skeleton in Mrs. Delay's cup-

board was the shameful fact that her grandfather was a carpenter.

"Hullo, what's this?" continued Mr. Creedle, raising another package, exhaling an unmistakeable odour of tan. It proved to be an assortment of leather scraps tastefully arranged, and was accompanied by another card recalling to Mrs. Vansittart-Coogan's remembrance the hideous truth that *her* maternal grandfather was a cobbler!

At this point the prettiest Miss Cummin retired behind a furze bush, and Mr. Wakenbarth went to see what was the matter.

The hamper contained other packages too numerous to mention, each addressed to some one or other of the brilliant throng, and each accompanied by a pithily-worded reminder of some ancestor or relative directly connected with the mechanic arts, the unkindest cut being half a dozen whisky bottles for Mrs. Pennyfeather-O'Lynn, who had in early girlhood sold John Barleycorn over a counter in Brandy Lane. On being opened they were found to contain train oil.

"I'll soon see to this," screamed Mr. O'Grady, who had been reminded of his first cousin "in the corporation," not as councillor, but as following the cleaner occupation of scavenger, "let's go back at once and give that cur Doolan a piece of our minds!" Here, Jerry——what the deuce——where's the waggonette?"

Ah, where? The road below was empty, the vehicle had disappeared.

"Well, this bangs Banagher!" roared Mr.

Creedle, and he danced on the tablecloth. Mrs. Pennyfeather-O'Lynn, realising the situation, sat down suddenly. The other ladies looked on gloomily. They were, they thought, ten or fourteen miles from Cork, but, for all they knew about the country, they might as well have been in the heart of Salisbury Plain.

The gentlemen commenced a spirited game of "Aunt Sally," utilising a cow-scratcher as a support for the bottles, and groaning vigorously old "Rags and Bones," while Mr. O'Grady propelled the hamper about the field with fiendish energy.

"Here? What the devil's the meaning of this, eh?" shouted a stentorian voice, and a bovine personage appeared, puffing alarmingly after his climb up the hill hide. No one took the least notice.

"What do you mean by breaking open my gate, sir?" he continued, addressing Mr. Creedle, who happened to be nearest.

"Why didn't you leave it open?" retorted that gentleman courteously, as he took the head off another bottle.

"Are you aware I own the field?" gasped the newcomer.

"I thought you said the gate," answered Mr. Creedle. "Well, well, hats off! He owns the field! Fee-simple or entail, sir?"

"Do you know what I am, you jackanapes?" screamed the other.

"No, nor care; but we know what you are *not*," observed Mrs. Coogan, majestically adjusting her long-handled glasses.

"I'm a justice of the peace, ma'am," the man went on, bobbing his head at her like an infuriated bull. "I'm Mr. Smyth-Wesson, lieutenant."

"Lord Lieutenant?" queried Mr. O'Grady, who had just come up.

"No, sir, lieutenant in the army!" roared the other.

"I don't believe a word of it!" declared Mrs. Coogan. "Lieutenants are usually gentlemen—or at least used to be before the days of competitive examinations."

The ladies barbed the reply by laughing contemptuously.

"Now, look here, my gay madam," spluttered the lieutenant, who had risen from the ranks and was not ashamed of it, by G—d, "just you keep a civil tongue in your head, or you'll find yourself jailed pretty soon! Just clear out, and give no more of your mountebank airs—gang of jolly Jerry-go-nimbles!"

"We are not jolly," interposed the English gentleman, "and the only Jerry amongst us went so nimbly that he took our car with him."

"Well, you'll find it further on," answered the furious proprietor, "I saw it myself going up that hill yonder, it can't have gone far. Come, clear out you mountebanks!"

"We are not mountebanks," said Mr. Delay, mildly.

"Oh, of course not," sneered the other, with a glance at the rouge on Mrs. Ferguson-Delay's face and the powder coating Mrs. Coogan's, "*you're*

not the gang of playactors from Cork who've been going about the country singing for half-pence since the manager vamoosed with the till; oh, no, I suppose I would not know a London jade if I saw her, oh, no!"

Here was a thing. All their lives the ladies had been straining every nerve to look quite English, you know, and this was the result—to be mistaken for the dames of the Royal Wind Mill Opera Company, which had been stranded in their city some weeks past! The pile on Mrs. Coogan's cotton-backed velvet basque fairly rose in quivering indignation.

"What infernal cheek!" screamed Mr. O'Grady. "We demeaned ourselves by coming into your dirty field, you beastly bog-trotter! Apologise, or, by Gad, I'll smash ye!"

"Yes, on paper!" shouted Mr. Creedle, tipping the proprietor's hat over his eyes. "Apologise or I'll make you not worth the ground you stand on!"

The lieutenant was a man of strategy. Springing back, he got to a higher level, and whistled shrilly. "Hi, Sparkler," he yelled. In answer, a lop-sided lurcher which had been surreptitiously chasing sheep on the heights above, made his appearance. At first he displayed much zeal by rushing forward furiously, but then, reflecting that his late amusement may have been a cause for complaint, moderated his pace. "Here, what do you mean by stopping? Sick 'em, lad," cried the lieutenant. That was enough for Sparkler. The sheep had nothing to do with the case. The bril-

liant party on the hill-side were ordinary trespassers, and with a howl he charged.

At this exact moment Mr. Wakenbarth stepped forward. "Excuse me, sir," he began, lifting his hand. Misunderstanding the gesture, the lieutenant advanced also, his fist clenched.

Sparkler was wall-eyed and conscientious. His objective was the group before him, but his infirmity making the line of advance diagonal, he collided a second later with the two gentlemen, bowling them over like nine-pins.

A shriek of terror burst from the ladies, and simultaneously they rushed for the gate. It was narrow, and more than one of the fair fugitives was stout. There was no time for false or true delicacy, and, Sparkler's yelps nerving them, they threw themselves, a screaming chaos of silk and muslin, on the wire fencing bounding the field, and scrambled madly over it to the road.

No one interested cares to recall what followed. In a moment the potential *deus ex machinâ* found himself engaged in a rough-and-tumble fight with Lieutenant Wesson, while a small army of farm hands, led by a man brandishing a dung-fork, surged down the hill.

The gentlemen did not fly, but poured a deadly shower of stones upon the advancing party, and then, though armed only with their walking-sticks, sprang to the onset.

The combat was short, Providence, as usual, favouring the bigger battalion, and the unequal struggle ended in the gradual retreat of the visitors,

the man with the muck-rake waving the trampled tablecloth in one hand while he rubbed a damaged optic with the other.

The ladies had instinctively taken to the ascending line of the road, and once safe behind an intervening angle of firs, paused to get breath. They were very eloquent on their recent experiences, all having suffered, as the barbed wires, decorated by scraps of coquettish toilettes, testified, and since there was no necessity to keep up appearances any longer, recriminations grew fast and furious. When the gentlemen joined them, however, hostilities ceased, and they confined themselves to stealthily effecting repairs in their costumes, yearning the while for privacy and a hand-glass.

A short council was held and an immediate advance decided upon, not because any definite plan had been arrived at, but because it promised to take them out of range of the offensive cheers for the "playacthors" still ringing in their ears.

The procession was headed by Mrs. Vansittart-Coogan, carried "King's Cradle," owing to the fact that she had lost one of her shoes, and brought up by Mrs. Pennyfeather O'Lynn, who had lost only a boot-heel, bemoaning, as she waddled along with a fearful list to port, the degeneracy of modern manhood. What was said about the Doolans, and how it was said, does not, fortunately, concern this truthful narrative, but the bitterest objurgations were those which the English gentleman, plus a black eye and minus a coat-tail, addressed to himself for ever having come to so "damnable a

country," where everybody and everything gave the lie direct to all previous human experience.

They had progressed thus painfully a quarter of a mile, when they encountered a seemingly endless line of vehicles wheeling rapidly in the opposite direction. They included, apparently, every shape devised by the wit of man, from the break-neck side-car to the lumbering butt, all being heavily laden, and the occupants decidedly hilarious. The gentlemen signalled to some in a condescending manner, but, with a laughing glance and a few words of badinage, the drivers invariably went past, the appearance of Mr. Creedle, who, being hatless, had tied up his head in a crimson silk handkerchief, attracting particular attention.

"Is it bewitched the people are?" panted Mrs. Pennyfeather-O'Lynn. "What on earth do they take us for?"

The answer was almost immediately forthcoming. At the next corner of the winding road they found themselves face to face with a number of gaily-painted waggons which had just come to a halt, and it needed only a glance at the brutalised faces of some men and women unyoking a car, whence a pitiful moaning issued, to show that they were members of a travelling menagerie—and it was for those they had been mistaken! Approaching the last car, which was piled with wicker merchandise, the property of some gipsies who had fallen in with the sorry train, they questioned the vagrants as to their whereabouts.

It is said the poor are the best friends of the poor,

but these gipsies must have been exceptions to the rule, or else millionaires in disguise, for the men, when they discovered the newcomers had no intention of buying, developed a surly demeanour, the women being especially sarcastic at the ladies' expense, and the disheartened merry-makers were about to press forward again when a hearse, glorious with nodding plumes, swept into sight. It was advancing at an easy pace, the driver listening intently to a tattered performer on the violin, perched beside him, the plumes, which were white, accentuating the festive character of the equipage. On being hailed, he drew up and entered into conversation with the group by the wayside. He was obvious and good-humoured. He had buried, he said, that day the prettiest "colleen" in Muskerry, whose "health" he had evidently been drinking at every available point along the route, and he was now returning to Cork.

On matters being somewhat incoherently explained, he instantly volunteered to give the entire party a lift thither, observing that if they did not care to accept it they might go home in a wheelbarrow, the only other available conveyance on that countryside just then. "Ye can take turns wheelin' it," he explained affably, "an' the leddies can take turns at sittin' in it, an' pay ye in kisses."

"Do you know who we are?" asked Mrs. Coogan.

"No," replied the jehu, with an audacious wink, "but I'd like to be betther acquainted my love."

"Yerrah, come up here, my darlin' colleen oge,"

piped the musician, waving his bow, "come up here betwun meself an' Mick Silk, an' 'tis I'll play ye a tune that'll warm the cockles of yer heart! Sure if it's the first time you rode in a hearse it won't be the last, plaise God!"

"Do you know anyone in Cork?" gasped Mrs. Pennyfeather-O'Lynn, observing that no thunderbolt cleft the blue, and she mentioned the names of her companions. The driver was not annihilated.

"Sorra wan of me knows," he replied philosophically, "I'm in from Ballyvourney a couple of weeks, an' this is my first job, but I'll take yer words for it that ye're jukes an' duchesses if ye like. But won't wan of the purty darlints sit up beside us an' tell us our fortune?"

"Look here, my man, *I'll* tell your fortune," cried the turbaned Mr. Creedle, "you'll get five pounds if you land us anywhere within the cab radius in Cork, and the jolliest lambasting you ever got in your life if you cheek those ladies!"

"Och, eyeh! Fair an' easy!" retorted the driver, his eye blazing, "Dinny O'Farral an' myself are as clane an' dacent boys as any of ye any day, an' know ourselves in the company of leddies, an' be heavens! if it's lambasting ye're talkin' of, I'm thinkin' ye got as much of that as ye can carry, an' more of it to ye! so good day." And he shook the reins.

"Oh, Mr. Silk," wailed the prettiest Miss Cummin, as if she had known him all her life, "are you going to desert us like this? Sure we'll sit in the hearse and give no trouble!"

"May my right arrum dhrop off me," shouted the jehu, instantly mollified by the appeal, "if I go back on ye, my heart's blud! Wait a bit," he continued, handing the ribbons to the fiddler, "an' 'tis I'll have ye sweet an' comfortable inside in a brace of shakes. The boords 'ill be a taste hard, maybe, but sure that's the bed we must all lie on wan day—'twill make ye think of yer latther ends, an' bedad if ye spread the pall out 'twill be betther than nothing!"

"It is not for yer silver pound," quoted the musician, rising unsteadily, "but for yer winsome leddies!" and then he slid down from his perch, and fell under the wheels.

There was really nothing else to do. The driver, who had descended, swung open one of the glass panels forming the sides of the vehicle, and the weary ladies climbed in amid bitter chaff from the vagrants, the child of song was restored to his place, the gentlemen distributed themselves all over the roof among the feathers, and the conveyance moved off, followed by derisive cheers.

"Tip us a chune, Dinny," chirruped Mr. Silk. "Why should we be sad? Sure 'tis laffin' at us the girl we berrid to-day 'ud be, for she died in the flower of her youth, when she was wrastlin' wid her twenties."

"Right you are, Micky," replied the other, adjusting his bow. "*Dum vivimus vivamus*!"

"Jus so," continued his friend, "sure the dead have the best of it. What are we ourselves? Dust an' shaddas!"

"Be my sowl, you hit it nate," cried the musician, ecstatically, "though you never larned the humanities! *Pulvis et umbra sumus*!"

"An' every day is takin' something away from us——"

"Right again!— *Singula de nobis anni praedantur, euntes; Eripuere*——. What? what? sure I'll soon forget my own name! Can any of ye finish it for me, boys?"

The gentlemen glared at him silently. They had all been "educated," some in England where they learned to play cricket indifferently, others in Ireland where they perfected that fine taste in alcoholic liquors for which they are so justly famous, but, of course, they had not the faintest idea of what he meant. Mr. Wakenbarth was a product of modern cramming, and, consequently, had promptly forgotten the modicum of classical learning deemed sufficient for the particular examination he had passed. The party fell several degrees in their new companions' estimation, but the driver came to the rescue. "It's Latin he's talking bhoys," he observed, apologetically. "He's my cousin, an' I'm givin' him a lift into Cork, for he's goin' to Americay to-morrow. There was two guineas a quarter paid for him at school—he was goin' to be a priest only he thought betther of it."

"Or worse, Mick," interrupted the musician, turning a bleared eye and a channeled face to his relative. They did their best for me, but drink an' the girls. Oh, if I was young again!" the weak

mouth quivered, and a tear fell on the hand that held the bow.

"Er—isn't there another road to Cork?" asked Mr. Wakenbarth nervously, as he strove to balance himself on the roof of the coach, which curved upward to a noble tuft of plumes springing from a gilded tin crown, emblematical of the reward waiting the deceased who for the time being should happen to occupy the place of honour beneath.

"Sorra wan of me knows," replied the driver, "'tis the road I kem. What's the matter wid it?"

"Nothing," said Mr. Wakenbarth.

"Are ye known on it?" asked the fiddler.

Mr. Wakenbarth thought it not unlikely, as he recognised the line of firs bounding the inhospitable Wesson's property, but reflected that this was one of the occasions when silence is golden.

"Here, the bow's rosined enough," cried Mr. Silk, shaking the reins, "the horses are doleful, an' a chune will raise the hearts of the darlins below too. Play up ye divil!"

Thus adjured, the fiddler brought his fiddle under his chin, and burst into "Patrick's Day."

Lieutenant Smyth-Wesson had been assisted to his residence, and several of his employees were now on the field of battle, leisurely sorting the *debris* of the fatal pic-nic. Hearing the music, they glanced round as the coach came on at a trot, the unconscious driver "humouring" the tune with his whip.

"Yerrah, Danny, look! On top ov the hearse! The blaggard that blackened yer eye!" shrieked a

woman at work on a neighbouring potato patch, addressing the man who had headed the charge that day.

The fatigue party faced round, and then started forward as if animated by one impulse. "Stop 'em," they roared, dashing down the hillside, "they bruk the gate an' the master's head! Stop 'em! Catch the harses!"

"Drive to blazes," shouted Mr. Creedle, who certainly did look a desperado.

The situation explained itself. The horses sprang into a gallop, and a stiff run of some two or three hundred yards ensued, the labourers rushing through the fields parallel with the road, and yelling, "Stop the playacthors!" when they were not throwing stones, though chivalrously refraining from aiming at the coach or its steeds. The fence of the potato garden brought them to a temporary halt, but the women took up the chase, the last object which presented itself to Mrs. Coogan's horrified eyes being the lusty figure of a brawny amazon leaping, with kilted skirts, from bed to bed, and hurling at the ladies caloric threats of an appalling character.

During the better part of the next hour the driver scarcely broke pace or silence, but, his chin upon his breast, remained watching the quivering ears of the leaders. The musician continued playing steadily, slipping from one tune to another, his weary eyes drinking in every detail of the lovely land he was quitting, the peaceful plains with their wealth of ripening corn, the silver glint of the wind-

ing Lee, the white walls of the farm-houses nestling amid the fir groves, the soft curves of the sweet low hills, the sapphire sky, the golden sunlight gilding all.

Finding that none of the tunes was "Daisy Bell," the gentlemen began to talk in low tones among themselves, cursing Mr. Doolan fluently, each striving to recall the special reason which induced him to come. At length a fiddle string broke, the "Colleen dhas" paused in the middle of her milking, the driver roused himself. They were rapidly approaching a little village, whose nobly proportioned publichouse was all atwinkle with windows flashing in the western sun.

"That was a close shave, bhoys," Mr. Silk observed. "I think we'd all be the betther for a dropeen of drink after all them wars."

"Look here," began Mr. Creedle nervously, remembering that during their council of war the united funds of the party had reached only half-a-crown, "don't you think we can wait till we get to Cork?"

"Now look you here my hardy bhoy," returned the other, who was growing sober, and consequently morose, "we found ye an' the girls below in a pinch an' axed no questions, an' nice traitment we got."

"That was a mistake," cried Mr. Delay.

"I'm not saying it wasn't," answered the jehu softly, "but all the same 'twas dhry work, an' we needn't thank you that our polls don't want stickin' plaster!"

"We'll make that all right when we get to Cork," shouted Mr. O'Grady manfully from among the feathers, "drive on the hearse!"

"I'm thinkin' you'll have something else to do," retorted Mr. Silk. coldly.

"But you'll get five pounds!" exclaimed Mr. Creedle.

"So you say," replied the driver diplomatically, "but I'm of opinion you'll be wantin' to buy a hat out of it for yourself first. Anyway, a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush an' if ye're willin' to be dacent now's yer time. An' this poor bhoy goin' away to-morrow!"

"You hit the nail on the head there, Mickey." cried the fiddler, slipping his instrument into its baize case, "Cicero couldn't give finer rhetoric out of him. What does the poet say?"

"—nunc vino pellite curas
Cras ingens iterabimus aequor!"

They were now abreast of the village hostelry, and sooth to say the gentlemen made no further demurs. It was the first time in their lives they had gone so long without liquid refreshment, and, casting the financial question to the winds, they descended in a body and entered the hospitable doorway.

The tavern lay on the very outskirts of the village, but the horses had not whinnied thrice for the bran mash supplied to them, when the entire infant and adult population had gathered round the conveyance—a whisper having gone forth that the "playacthors" were returning, the menagerie

having passed through the village earlier that same day.

The ladies sat huddled together behind the glass and glared at the natives who criticised their appearance frankly. They had often glanced contemptuously at country dames sitting with outstretched legs in Scotch cars rumbling along to market, and wondered how it was done. They had found now that it was not so easy as it looked.

After a while the proprietoress of the inn came forth, a child at her breast, and opening the door leaned forward confidentially.

"Come here," she said, lowering her voice, "which of ye is the tatooed lady? I hear she have harps an' anchors an' shamrocks an' things all over her. Maybe you're the party, ma'am," she continued, addressing Mrs Coogan directly, for the ladies gave her no sort of help. "If you are, perhaps you wouldn't object to show a little biteen—yer arrum—to plaze the child?"

Mrs. Coogan was not surprised; she was scarcely indignant, all things seemed possible. She did not even laugh—the cutting "Coogan laugh," so well known in society; she simply replied, "My good woman, you have been misinformed; I am not tatooed." But oh, the dignity with which she said this!

There was an embarrassed pause; the hostess shifted her squalling burden to the other arm. "Wisha, 'tis a hard life," she said, gazing pensively at the pale faces before her, "goin' round on them horses, an' jumpin' through hoops! I'm

thinkin' I'm betther off myself. Do he bate ye?" she went on, glancing covertly at Mr. Creedle, who with the other gentlemen had just emerged from the tavern, "I hear he's a divil."

"If you're a mother, and have a mother's heart," panted Mrs. Pennyfeather-O'Lynn, employing a brogue she had not used for twenty years, "bring us out a sop of straw to put under us—I'm shaken to a jelly—and I'll pay you in gold—when I'm passing next!"

"What nonsense!" cried Mrs. Coogan, who had appropriated the lion's share of the pall, "do you want to make us more ridiculous than we are? This is dreadful! I wish he'd drive on!"

The wish was instantly gratified. Down the village street came a woman with cap-strings flying and arms uplifted. "Police!" she screamed, "Police! There they are, the thimble-riggers that stole me wan sheet off the hedge this blessed mornin'! Police!"

The gipsies as well as the menagerie had passed that way.

The events of the day had taught the party that promptitude of action is better than fluency of explanation. Mrs. Coogan pulled the door to, the gentlemen swarmed up on the hearse, and by the time the owner of the purloined linen had reached the crowd, the death coach was rattling away over the cobble stones, but not swiftly enough to escape a stone, hurled by her nervous arm, which crashed against one of the panels.

All doubt as to the quality of his companions

left Mr. Silk's mind. "Begor," he said, looking round upon them grimly, and laughing the bitter laugh of an angry Irishman, "ye kem this road before, I'm thinkin'!"

The gentlemen treated the incident as a good joke, and dismissed it—their spirits rising at the prospect of a speedy release from their equivocal position. As the hearse swept on the spirit of song woke within them, and they chorussed the pathetic ballad of "White Wings," possibly as a delicate compliment to the decorations of the vehicle, and then Mr. Creedle obliged the company with "Bell Mahone." "Wa-i-t for me-e-e at He'ven's Ga-a-a-te, sweet Belle Mahone!" warbled Mr. Creedle.

"Wait for you, is it?" remarked the driver, touching up the leaders. "Be my sowl, 'twould very much depind on which side av the gate she was waitin'! If 'twas on the right side, she'd be a bit mouldy!"

"Shut up!" cried Mr. Creedle, autocratically. "Croneen give us an Irish song!"

Thus appealed to, Mr. Croneen responded by murdering a music hall ditty whose hero was one "Slatthery."

The musician, who had been busy mending his bow, looked round suddenly. "Are ye Irish?" he asked when the applause died down.

"Well, we are," replied Mr. Delay, in a casual manner, "but," pointing to Mr. Wakenbarth, "this gentleman is English."

O'Farral smiled.

"Oh, by the way," said Mr. Wakenbarth, finding attention directed towards himself, and addressing the fiddler, "what is the name of that piece you were playing just before we stopped? It was exquisite."

"'The Purty Maid milking her Cow,'" replied O'Farral, and, bringing the violin under his chin, he began to play, singing in thin tones—

"Oh! blest be the sons of the stranger,
Who, nursed on thy beautiful breast,
With thine shared the strife and the danger
For thee, bleeding Queen of the West!
When the child of thy foe would befriend thee,
Nor wrong to thy bosom allow,
Why should not the blessing attend thee,
Of the poor maiden milking her cow?'

"By jove!" said Mr. Wakenbarth, slowly, "but what does it mean?"

"It means," replied O'Farral, slipping the fiddle decisively into its case again, "that an Englishman who loves Ireland is betther than an Irish cawbogue who turns her into con-tempt an' derision!"

This outburst put an end to the musical entertainment, and the gentlemen became aggressively haughty in demeanour as the white length of the Western Road opened before them, and the spires of St. Finn Barr's, sun-smitten, rose into the pale blue of the eastern sky. Shandon's pepper-box tower showed above the distant grey haze, and the terraced gardens of Sunday's Well, seen through rifts in the Mardyke foliage, climbed upward to

St. Vincent's Church, whence bells were softly chiming. They were at home at last.

"Hi, jarvey!" cried Mr. Creedle, signalling a passing "jingle." "Come here! You may stop, Mr. Silk, we'll get down."

Mr. Silk whipped up the horses.

"Don't you hear what I'm saying?" continued Mr. Creedle, "we want to get down."

"I don't doubt it," replied the jehu, "but I wasn't born yesterday. You'll stay where you are, mo bouchal!"

The jingle had now come alongside, the driver recognising Mr. Creedle at once, and casting amazed glances at the occupants of the hearse. Just then a side-car rounded the corner of the road leading to the gaol. Mr. O'Grady hailed it. The man cracked his whip and came abreast of the second vehicle, looking up eagerly at the prospective fare, and shouting, "Yes, sir, all right, sir!" a puzzled grin stealing over his face as he took in details.

The hearse went ahead still—the four horses stretching into such a gallop as hearse horses rarely enjoy—the longed-for stables and the evening meal luring them on.

"What the devil do you mean, you idiot?" screamed Mr. Creedle, "you'll be paid!"

Mr. Silk laughed and flicked the near wheeler. "I mane," he said, quietly, "that I heard a panel go when the woman ye stole the sheet from thrun that stone, an' ivery wan of them panels is of plate glass an' cost twopn' ten, an' be the crass on ivery

donkey from here to the Giants' Causeway it won't be out o' *my* wages!"

"If there's any damage done we'll make it good," cried Mr. Croneen magnificently.

"That's what we're goin' to see, plaze God," answered Mr. Silk sweetly, "but divil resave the step you'll walk until I land ye at the livery stables."

"But the ladies," Mr. Creedle began.

"Och, don't you mind the ladies," replied the driver, calmly, "the darlints are snug and comfortable."

Now this description, as far as the ladies were concerned, must be considered as strictly euphemistic. Every moment they had been expecting a halt, but when the first street shut them in, and staring faces on the side-walks took the place of green banks, they grew alarmed. Rising on one knee, Mrs. Coogan tapped the ceiling with the wreck of Mrs. Pennyfeather-O'Lynn's harlequin umbrella. She succeeded in attracting Mr. Wakenbarth's attention. "Tell him to stop," she cried, distractedly, "does he want to make a show of us?"

Lying on the roof, and craning his neck over the crenellated decoration bordering it, Mr. Wakenbarth tried to explain the situation through the glass, but his words were indistinct, and his hat was blown off. Mr. Wakenbarth nearly followed it, and only saved himself by a miracle of dexterity. Then, realising the absurdity of his attempt, he crawled back to his former position

beside the "*corona vitæ*," preferring to let events develop themselves rather than imperil his neck by talking to a group of excited women through a half-inch glass. The ladies were furious.

"He's mad!" exclaimed Mrs. Coogan.

"Open the door and leave me jump out!" screamed Mrs. Ferguson-Delay. "I may break my legs, but I won't be a laughing-stock for these common wretches!"

This was understood as a noble sentiment, and treated accordingly.

"I'm sure," continued the lady, "that beast of a driver is in the pay of the Doolan's, he wouldn't have been so ready to take us up if he wasn't!"

The other dames assented at once in a sisterly desire of punishing the prettiest Miss Cummin for the airs she had assumed as saviour of the party.

"I saw it all in his eye," Mrs. Ferguson-Delay went on, "only I didn't like to say anything at the time."

"Oh, Mother of Moses, look, there's a police-man following us!" cried Mrs. Pennyfeather-O'Lynn, "we're the sight of the streets! Oh, why did I come?"

"Because you were too drunk to know better!" cried Miss Hartigan-Bennett, in a terrible voice. That young lady had preserved a Trappist-like silence from the fatal moment when the hamper gave up a hank of onions to which was attached a neat card reminding her of a relative who had once driven an honest trade in that popular, if odorous vegetable, and truly, had she exercised

similar self-control a little longer, the harmony of the party would not have suffered.

"You impudent hussy," gasped the outraged matron, "'tis easy to see the bringing-up you got, but mind yourself—it isn't the first time I walloped——," but then the hopelessness of repartee in face of the brutal obviousness of the answer volunteered to her conundrum overcoming her, she put up the fragments of her parasol, and reiterating weakly "the sight o' the streets," burst into tears.

There could be no doubt about the accuracy of Mrs. Pennyfeather-O'Lynn's last remark. Every window along the route was flung up, the sidewalk swarmed with laughing groups, the jingle and side-car flew neck-a-neck beside the hearse, the jarveys yelling "Never fear, sir, we'll stand by you!" as if Mr. Silk were grim Pluto in person bearing the flower of Corkonian society to his gloomy abodes. The policeman (called by Mr. O'Grady) was running steadily along in their wake, followed by a whooping mob, and looking as if he alone knew all about this extraordinary occurrence, but was permitting matters to go just a little bit farther ere he interposed.

As the hearse rattled into Patrick Street a pony phaeton was pulled hastily aside to let it pass, and in it the ladies saw the amused face of "Mrs." Ombre, who was *not* of society. They caught a glimpse of the glistening teeth, the uptilted eyes, and heard the echo of, perhaps, the heartiest laugh the poor soul had enjoyed for many a long day. It was the last straw. With a convulsive jerk

Mrs. Coogan wrenched the pall from under her portly form and that of the unsuspecting Mrs. Pennyfeather-O'Lynn, cast herself down at full length, and drew it over her face—a universal shriek of laughter going up from the spectators.

Mr. and Mrs. Doolan were about to sit down to dinner with their guest when the crashing of wheels and the rippling of merriment from the streets made them go to the window. They were just in time. On came the mourning coach, Mr. Creedle now struggling with the jehu for possession of the reins amid frantic cheers from the non-combatants, the gentlemen clinging wildly to the roof, the ladies within disposed picturesquely around that one calm, silent figure beneath the pall, which rose and fell with her stertorous breathing! In that one fleeting glance the wrongs of years were righted.

The recognition was mutual. Mr. O'Grady would have given half his life for one crushing epithet to hurl at those grinning faces behind the window panes, but the only words which came were the lamentably ineffective ones—"Doolan, ye devil!" hissed out with shaking fist as the hearse swept round the corner to the livery stables and chaos.

It is said that hilarity is a good aid to digestion. If this be so, their dinner did the three conspirators more good than any other meal of their lives, for they knew that the tale of Doolan's revenge would be "argument for a week, laughter for a month, and a good jest for ever!"

KING DIARMUID.

In the sunlit days while Rome yet trembled on a single hill, there was a great battle fought in Munster of the Music, great, as befitted a hosting of Kings—fierce as a strife of brothers. On that high plateau looped by the curves of the winding Lee, sentinelled by Ardrum, it had raged from noon to noon of two summer days with varying fortune, the fray now toppling over the great ridge of Curragh Beg, now raving along Farren height, even to Rossbeg, amid whose foot-hills it sank hoarsely to rest, the spent combatants giving tardy ear to the mighty Druid of Rostellan, who had hastened from his woods to stay the hideous fight, and not unwillingly they heard his decree which ran thus—Thomond's king, Diarmuid, should without bite or sup march northward across the fords of the Lee to Lisnaraha, while the men of Desmond should fall back beyond the Bride to Lisheens and the hills above at the dawning of the day, ere award of dispute be made.

Although he had kept the Gap of Danger through all the hot hours of conflict, King Diarmuid did not sleep well, and towards daybreak turned on his side with such a sigh and such a clatter of armour that Conor of the Women, his foster-brother, woke languidly yawning, and asked how he fared. "Badly," replied the king, "I have

scarce closed an eye." "Art thou wounded?" Diarmuid shook his head. "Hast thou not glory enough," pursued the other, "outside are many men sleeping very quietly, and yet their heads rest not on the breasts of victory?"

The king sighed. "The breasts of a mortal woman come between me and forgetfulness," he replied, patting the muzzle of Scathach, his old wolf-hound, as waking at his feet she lifted herself to lick his hand. "What is the favour of her?" said Conor of the Women. "She is tall, with a roundness on every limb of her that drives gauntness afar, and a broadness and a depth about her that would make another clumsy. Her hair is the very gold of the sun, her colour, new milk with on it the hue of apple-blossom, and under it the purple of royal veins. Her face, *a cara,* is Tir-na-n-Oge!"

"Truly thou hast won such a woman as I would possess," murmured Conor, after a pause. "Thou wilt find harpers enough at Lisnaraha to woo her thither—and if not her, another as fair. Where have ye met?" "Never once in this life," replied the king, "but her face came before me while the Druid was speaking, and since it has burned in my thought."

Conor of the Women smiled, drawing his cloak about him. "The Lee will cool that vision," he said, "phantom women love not fresh water," And again he slept.

The king, propped upon an elbow, lay watching the camp fires dwindle in the dusk of dawn; amid the oak groves by the river a thrush was singing of

the glory yet to be. Caressing the ears of Scathach, Diarmuid lay and listened, the music soothing him as the perfume of woodbine cools the brow of an August night, but sleep came not: so, rising heedfully, he donned his helmet, rich with battle-dinted gold, and went apart from the sleeping camp. The valleys of Bride and Lee slept too beneath grey shadows, but eastward the fire tower near Corca Luige showed sharp, and the white dun on the bold height men now call Frankfield made a spot of light; westward, the mountain peaks were rosy. A zephyr quivered amid the heron feathers on his crest. Too young to sing about the tree tops or whisper in the reeds, it had shrunk from the brave stretches of Farren, affrighted by the grim war-plumes that fluttered at its touch above stern brows locked against the tender fingers of the Dawn. As the light grew there was a pale glinting over the misty field of fight, and here a helm, there an axe blade gleamed among the wreathed slain. King Diarmuid sought a rocky mound guarded by pines, the ruggedness of it softened by the prattling of a rill that brightened the tint of its mosses, like a child dancing beside an old man soured by the evil of life.

Vague thoughts drifted through the king's mind as he stood beneath the changing sky, dreams of the Tuatha De Danann from whom he sprang, dim revisitings of things heard beyond the golden veil of infancy, and the face of the dream-woman wove itself into those visions, and from amid the warp and woof of them the haunting eyes spoke invitation.

From out the white sea floating above the pleasant plains and clothing the valley sides something black and hooped slowly disentangled itself, painfully crawling towards Diarmuid—something very old, very feeble, that once had been a woman. As she laboured up, the sobbing of her spent breath brought a flush to Diarmuid's cheek, and he descended to assist her. When the mound was gained she leaned for a space, gasping, against a pine stem, and then, lifting her seamed face, whispered, "Hail, O King, I crown thee with victory and honour."

Diarmuid bowed gravely, She was silent some moments, groping and gasping, then, putting the white thin strands of hair from her enrhumed eyes, she looked upward with the pathos of childhood. "Art thou not Diarmuid of Thomond,' she asked, "whose glory it is never to refuse a woman aught?"

"It is as thou sayest, mother," he replied.

"Gaze upon me, and listen in pity," she murmured. "I was a woman of the Tuatha De Danann, my mother a princess of the far land of Phœnicia, but suddenly stricken from the bloom of great beauty to what I am. After Cuchulain had vanquished the Power on Slieve Mis, Blathnaid asked my help to woo him to the dun of the man who won her from him. I gave it, but on the day the Finneglas ran white, power and place were reft from me in punishment, and, O King, in one half-hour my beauty, for I was lovelier than the dawn."

She spoke with convulsive intakings of breath,

telling of her beauty simply, as old women do, praising what is gone as we praise the dead whose living worth never wrung a syllable from our jealous tongues. Diarmuid fixed his grey eyes upon her, compassion stirring in his mighty heart. The woman, caught by a paroxysm of coughing, sank down.

From the great tent of the Captains, Conor came forth, stretching tired arms and yawning, Scathach at his heels, stretching and yawning too. Seeing the king he waved his hand. "Wilt to the river, O Diarmuid," he cried, "we may not break fast till Lisnaraha be won, but a bath will make marching merrier?"

"I am occupied," replied the king.

Conor's negligent eye fell upon the heap huddled beside the grey stones, and he laughed carelessly. "Weaving charms for the golden-haired woman?" he said gaily. "Or, maybe, 'tis thus thy dream comes true. Let not such sweet converse, I pray thee, stay the marching beyond the appointed hour!" And humming a tune those hills know well, he turned away, Scathach in his jingling wake.

Diarmuid gazed down upon the woman. She had covered her head with the hem of her tattered cloak, and as she now drew it away there was colour fighting through the myriad wrinkles on her parchment cheek. "Hard has been thy lot," said the king. "Hard it would have been out of Eire," she replied, "but here I never knew scorn nor scathe."

The king smiled proudly. "And what may I do? I am a stranger here, and we march on the instant."

"Truly a great thing—great to madness," she answered. "It was adjudged by Bride, in pity, that if I who had helped to betray a great man could find a greater to take my woe upon him, in strictest silence, for one hour's quarter, or until the sun paints the pine shadow above yonder *monadans*, I might win back for natural space youth and beauty, and after them, the preciousness of death. Often have I sought such a one, but ever failed—wilt thou fail me?"

"And then?" demanded Diarmuid, striving to probe what truth might lie behind the viscid gleam where eyes had been.

"I know not," she replied, "and the risk hath affrighted many." Then bending forward with a crackling of joints, she fell at his knees. "Oh if ever woman pillowed thy head on her bosom, adventure for me," she whispered, "the burden of the years is crushing, and the long pain of the mind that cannot grow old!"

"Many women have I known," replied Diarmuid, "for one only would I adventure such a thing." And he spoke of the dream-woman who had troubled him. A whimpering, pitiful beyond the power of words to express, interrupted him. The woman was sobbing, her white hair about the insteps of feet that never went backward from danger. The man drew his sword, and swore to silence. "Lady, I will adventure!" he said.

As the blade shot back there came a mighty rustling in the pine tops that stirred not. "Water," whispered a dry voice, "sprinkle me!" Diarmuid gathered some from the runlet and lightly tossed it over the head where now there was a faint glow of gold. On a sudden he grew weary, and leaned perforce against the pine stem. A dimness filmed his vision, bells rang in his ears and the chanting of thin voices—

> Diarmuid of Thomond, of woman the tool—
> One morn a hero, the next but a fool.

He raised his drooping head, looking round haughtily, but said no word, although he had begun to ache at every joint. Brushing a hand across his eyes, he saw for a moment distinctly the amber of the dawn and a woman against it, her face turned eastward. At first he marvelled only at the gold-shot splendour of her crimson mantle and the silvery whiteness of her robe, its deep-bordered hem splashed by violet fancies; then, as she turned slowly her ecstatic face westward, he recognised the woman of his dreams.

Slowly she lifted the dazzling perfection of her snowy arms and touched tentatively, then with greedy fingers, the great masses of golden hair that brightened the sunrise, and, laughing delightedly, wound the coils over her blue-veined wrists in a luxury of possession.

The sharpness of vision dulled again, the soundless bells tinkled, the voices sang—

> High in his place great Conor shall rule,
> And women shall tell of Diarmuid the Fool.

After a while the woman turned towards him, her red lips parted. A footstep whispered in the grass; it stopped, drowned by the sudden jangle of harness and scabbard. She was now looking past Diarmuid—smiling. The king heard Conor's voice in respectful greeting, and saw the warrior bend over her little hand. Never had Munster beheld a pair more evenly matched in eye and port. The king looked down upon himself and hardly repressed a cry. It was not the body of Diarmuid without blemish, but a shrivelled casing of shrunken bones sharp-showing through mouldering rags. Green brass bound yet the rotted leather at his waist, and the weight of a sword blade rusted to its sheath, dragged heavily at his left side. A weight, too, was pressing on the crown of his head, and the red rusted rim of his helmet was sinking over the half-extinguished light of his sunken eyes. There was moisture running down the channels from those eyes, and moisture at the corners of his mouth. He strove feebly to wipe it away, but soon it recommenced, and he realised that he was very old. Dimly he could see the woman and Conor in conversation, she did not glance at him again. Conor was blind save for the enchanting face smiling upon him.

"And so thou didst come to behold the victor of the fight? It is my sorrow and my pleasure, lady, to ask thee to content thyself with only his poor foster-brother. Perchance he is ordering the marching, or maybe, beguiling the time in converse with a most adorable dame." And with the

hair-brained insolence of youth, he laughingly described the woman who had accosted the king. "'Tis wonder thou didst not mark them," he went on—"yonder where that old man is blinking in the sun. Harkye, friend, didst see King Diarmuid and an old hag here?"

Diarmuid strove to leave the pine and approach them, but his head reeled. Through Conor's words came the steady tramp of marching feet and before his glazing eyes the passing of spear heads. His men were filing on to the fords. A mocking breeze blew out of the East and carried in their train the mouldering fragments of his plume that had lightened on the crest of battle twelve little hours before. A hoarse chant swelled up from a thousand throats, the triumph song of Diarmuid which the harpers had composed over night, and the victors sang on the edge of the day.

He strove to stand erect as the faces he knew swept past—would he ever march with them again? Would he ever again know the mad joy of onset, the delirium of fame, or sweeter than all, the homage of woman's eyes! He stretched out a shrivelled hand over whose knuckles the bracelets fell clattering, and opened his mouth to cry—"It is I—Diarmuid, the King!" but the memory of his oath fell upon his tongue, and broken by the struggle, he sank to the kindly earth, his forehead bowed upon his cold knees as the last rank went by.

A soft muzzle was thrust against his face, the muzzle of Scathach who, following Conor from the river, had run beside the lines, seeking the king,

and then casting back, found him. Diarmuid looked up, patting the rough head with heavy hand, the shadow of the pine had fallen on the red berries.

With a neighing of steeds and a clattering of brass, Conor's chariot glittered near. He was entreating the woman to mount. She looked back on the poor wasted face weeping at mouth, and at eyes almost hidden by the rim of the rusted helm where only the untarnishable gold shone pure. There was pity, loathing, anguish in her lovely eyes, but, having taken a few steps, she paused, writhing, convulsed by the revulsion of woman's flesh. Conor's shadow mingled with her's. "'Tis but some man-at-arms, beggared and old, watching to plunder the dead," he whispered, "No fit sight for thee."

She bent her golden head, and silently moved on to where the hound's tongue was tenderly licking the ashen cheek. Conor interposed. She held her way, pressing recklessly on into his arms, and before he was aware of it, he kissed her, intoxicated by the flower and perfume of her loveliness. She pushed him aside one proud moment, and as he sank on his knee, burst into a passion of weeping.

For one instant a blazing hate flamed through Diarmuid, flamed from shrivelled feet to palsied head, then, an infinite comprehension, a noble pity quenched it——. And then the gods were kind.

Some peasants burying the dead chanced upon a handful of bones not worth spading back to earth, guarded by a wolf-hound showing toothless gums

in futile defence. They did not harm her, but took the helmet at whose splendour they wondered, slowly rubbing it back to brightness, and telling each other that it was fit for a great man, yea, for King Diarmuid himself.

STEPHANIE DE LIANCOURT

I.

THE castle of Carrigadroghid occupies a unique position, being built upon a rocky ledge rising from the bed of the Lee, which winds past through a typical Munster scene. I should never have beheld its squared stone chimneys or dismantled gable-ends if a chance journey to southern Ireland had not resulted in a meeting with my old friend Bob Speedwell, who insisted on my spending a few days at a cottage he was then renting near this lovely and secluded spot.

The first day of my visit passed agreeably with rod and creel, but on our return to Fern Lodge a letter awaited my friend which, he explained, would detain him in the neighbouring town of Macroom for some hours next day. Desirous of saving Mrs. Speedwell the task of entertaining me and keeping an eye to the devastations of a clumsy girl who burlesqued the duties of a cook, I volunteered to accompany Bob on his drive and try my luck back along the Lee.

Accordingly, after an early breakfast next morning, we set off through the fresh air, riotous with the song of the larks, to a point close upon the bridge approaching the village of Macroom, where we parted. "Good luck, old fellow," said Bob.

"I'll be back before dinner. Try the black gnat I tied yesterday, and don't deluder all the fishes clean out of the water by showing them those London beauties of yours;" my cheery friend holding the tinselled contents of my fly-book in the utmost contempt, as delusions and snares for the sportsman alone.

There had been promise of a cloudy day when we started, but before I had thrown the first cast the sun was blazing in the intense blue of an Irish sky. The sport was not so good as on the previous day, and my interest in it soon waned; but I consoled myself with the reflection that few unsuccessful anglers are blessed with such scenery. It was close on noon when I caught sight of the gables of Carrigadroghid again. Leisurely reeling up my line, I determined to halt here and while away an hour beside this grim relic of the old strenuous times of siege and foray. Unjointing my rod, I flung myself upon a bank connected by an isthmus of sand with the island on which the castle stands, and leaned back, my hat over my eyes, trying to reconstruct the past from the legends Bob Speedwell had gathered among the peasantry round: how it was built to satisfy the caprice of some dead and gone Una O'Carroll; how Broghill besieged it, hanging Egan, the Bishop of Ross, before the walls, because he urged the defenders against surrender; and how, finally, "the fellow in the laced coat" took it by the stale device of trundling up mock cannon under the noses of its astute garrison. Poor old tower, how sturdily it still stood above

the careless water that mirrored its ruin now as once it mirrored its glory, the battlements gone, the window, whence Una's lovely face looked forth in the dim long ago on grazing kine and swelling pasture, a fissure in the battered wall! We English are not a sentimental folk; but I think that for a moment the pathetic desolation of those fire-blackened stones, which had known so many human joys and human sorrows, impressed me more deeply than it is ever likely to impress even those who probably were descendants of the men who once held sway here; a country lad cleaning his master's cart hard by, or a slouching untidy matron lounging down the bank for water, her black hair tumbling about her ears, her new wedding-ring glittering in the sunlight as she swung her brazen pail.

With the intention of examining the place more closely I rose and sauntered across to the bridge, half ancient, half modern, where the narrow past and wider present seem to meet before the postern opening on it from the castle. This entrance was, however, barred by a rude door covered with weather-stained advertisements, but so rickety that pushing it aside a little I was able to look beyond. There was not much to see; only a floor cumbered by a fallen roof, a portion of a broken stairway up the wall, and a pencil of light striking in through a half-blocked window. I looked at my watch and was turning away to seek some fresh distraction, when I found myself face to face with a lady who evidently had crossed the bridge from the

opposite side, and had come quite close before I was aware of her presence. Involuntarily stepping back that she might go by, I lifted my hat and was about to pass on, reluctantly, for the face she turned to me was, and is still to my thinking, the most beautiful I ever beheld. Instead of advancing she paused and said, with bird-like flutter in her voice: "Pardon me, sir, but the door, is it open?"

I regretted to say that it was not.

"Ah, how unfortunate!" She spoke English with a decidedly French accent, making a little gesture of disappointment.

"If we inquire at those cabins," I said after an awkward interval, during which I resumed my hat, "we should get some information about the place, though there is not much to be seen. The whole building is dilapidated; the floor seems covered with rubbish."

She nodded, and then turning back, we walked together towards the few houses built near the angle formed by the intersection of the road over the bridge with that leading to Macroom. "I trust," observed the lady, "that I do not trouble you; but I wish to see the interior so much."

I assured her that it was no inconvenience, inwardly blessing the fate which had thrown such a diversion in my way, while I devoutly hoped she was not one of a party, and instinctively glanced round across the bridge fearing to see the ubiquitous car and its attendant driver. "I came from over the hill," said the lady, interpreting my look.

"From Coachford?" I observed, proud of my local knowledge.

She smiled: "Oh, no, a little beyond it."

We had now reached one of the houses, and in answer to my inquiries were directed to another where the key of the castle was kept. After a characteristic delay, the custodian, an old woman, was found, and under her guidance we retraced our steps, my companion glancing around her on every side, and talking of the various objects which met her eye; now it was the increase of the ivy on one of the northern gables, now the size of some ash-stems which leaped from the midmost buttress of the bridge. "They are quite great trees now," she said; "and yet, if you were to have seen what little twigs they were once!"

"Their growth must have been very rapid of late years," I ventured, looking down over the parapet.

"Oh, no," she replied, laughing deliciously, "quite the contrary, I think."

I was surprised into staring at her, but youth was instinct in every movement. Her figure was about the middle height and admirably proportioned, with perhaps a slight inclination to plumpness; her dress, too, as well as I can recollect, was quite fashionable, being in the prevailing mode called Directorate. I had seen just such another gown on Mrs. Speedwell the previous evening.

The old woman who had hobbled on before us opened the door and stood waiting. Entering we found ourselves in an irregular enclosure about thirty feet each way. The lady ceased speaking,

and crossing the threshold with a quick, assured step, looked about her, a lovely figure in the subdued light. She went to an angle formed by the walls immediately facing the river, and peered upward. "Ah," she cried, "how it goes, year by year, and gives no sign, until some fine morning, crash, it all comes down! That is the way of ruins; they seem always the same till one day comes a storm and, *pouf*, your old castle disappears. The steps are gone that used to be here," she continued, glancing along the wall. "Look, you can see their impressions yet in the mortar; but there are a few remaining near that narrow little window where the light comes in. The view from it must be very pretty." She pointed to a lancet-shaped slit in the wall perhaps fourteen feet above our heads.

"Och, sure, miss, if ye'd like we could get a ladder," observed the guardian readily. "There's one convaniant at Jerry Downey's." The lady thanked her with a bright smile and came to the door. "I will get it," I volunteered, starting forward. "Oh, no, sir, sure he'll bring it himself; I'll go meself an' tell him," replied the woman, and she limped away, the other thanking her again with a graceful condescension quite different from her manner towards me. Then going to one of the lower windows, she gazed out upon the even flow of the Lee. "How unchanging it is!" she said after a pause. "Nothing seems to matter; *tout lasse, tout passe, tout casse.* Look at the great white cows standing in the water as if it was only

yesterday. You are a philosopher, sir; it is the fashion," she added, turning to me with an easy imperious confidence which I have omitted to say lay behind all the suavity of her manner. "Can you tell me what is Time?"

Now, I am a plain man, without any predilection for philosophical discussions, which honestly I consider a waste of breath; for prove what you will, annihilate your adversary as you may, the question in dispute remains much the same as before. It is like shooting at the moon with an eighty-ton gun; you raise a dust, make a stir, and end by leaving the moon where you found her—in the air. Besides, beautiful as my chance acquaintance was, I did not relish being catechised in the half negligent tone she assumed. Accordingly I answered a little stiffly, that my time had been too much taken up by the practical affairs of life to leave me any wide margin for inquiring into its nature. "And I have been given to understand, madam," I concluded, "that the efforts of those who have devoted their lives to such studies have not been crowned by any tangible success."

"Ah, I see," she rejoined gaily, casting a fragment of mortar into the river. "*Le raisonnement en bannit la raison*. You are practical, like your great nation; an Englishman I presume? Yes, I thought so from the first; you have a more erect air than the people about here. They look conquered. Well, so they are, and so they deserve to remain; though still, they came very near shaking

you off once, but fate and the wind fought for you—ah, here they come!"

"She ceased as we heard footsteps approaching, and presently the old woman reappeared accompanied by a man carrying a ladder. This being raised against the wall, not without much discussion and gesticulation, my companion mounted swiftly and looked out through the window I mentioned; then she descended, had the ladder shifted to another place, and examined the walls themselves here and there as if to test their solidity, taking up a new position some minutes after, moving from point to point with what appeared to me the aimless curiosity of the sightseer. I had at first offered to hold the ladder, and now continued to do so, as well as assist in carrying it to the spots she indicated; while the woman and the man watched us, a deferential smile on their lips which nothing but what I must call the native good breeding of the Irish could have restrained from breaking into a grin, as the lady prosecuted her search, and I, shamefacedly enough, no doubt, played second fiddle; for I think a man always looks foolish obeying the behests of a woman when he does not clearly understand what she is about. In this case, too, there was really little need for holding the ladder; it was short enough and there was no danger of a serious fall. I had not the faintest idea of what she meant by acting thus; and although she was undeniably very bewitching I began to think of a decent excuse to get out of my rather ridiculous position. For the second or

third time she had the ladder brought back under the window she had observed first; and she was in the act of descending when she uttered a little low cry, stopped short, and glanced down over her shoulder. I looked up, one hand on the ladder, the other holding my watch; then she burst into a very genuine laugh. "A thousand pardons, sir," she exclaimed in French. "I have been extremely selfish; pray forgive me!"

I had once stayed for some weeks in Paris, and, guessing at her meaning, assured her in my best French that it was of no matter; and had it been my busiest day instead of my idlest, I should have said the same, for a lovelier face, especially when she smiled, no woman ever lifted in the sunlight. She laughed again, and began to pick hastily at some stones directly under the embrasure of the window, muttering to herself in rapid, disjointed words, and then said aloud: "This is very stiff, lend me your sword. Oh, I forget, excuse me." She looked round again, and added, still in French, "That woman yonder is watching me; make her go away for a few moments." She was imperious now and much agitated. I left the ladder, and addressing the woman drew her outside with some trivial inquiries concerning the exterior of the building. I kept her occupied thus some minutes, fully conscious that she was scrutinising me keenly, though at the time I could not guess why. She had those piercing, intelligent eyes one often meets among the older women of the Irish peasantry, and I had noted, too, that, although

her manner was deferential, she had not the abashed bearing of the "bhoy" in the presence of his superiors.

After a short pause the lady came to the postern and called to me, still speaking French: "Sir, you are really too kind, but there is something here, a—a *souvenir,* I wish to take away, but it is so tightly wedged between the stones I cannot get it out I do not wish this woman to know, and if I had a knife, broad-bladed, I could extract it myself; no, not that," as I produced my penknife; "it would break. How unfortunate! What o'clock is it? I told her, she actually stamped her foot with impatience.

Suddenly a bright thought struck me. "I have a fishing-rod," I said. "It is on the bank, quite near; I will go and fetch it." I would have hurried away, but she cried out in almost agonised tones, "No, no, do not leave me; send the woman." Much mystified, I turned to our guide and told her where to find the rod; but catching sight of the man who had brought the ladder crossing the road, I shouted my directions to him, for I was ashamed to send an old woman on such an errand. Together we re-entered the castle, the lady apologising in English for the trouble she gave, and questioning the woman about the different families in the immediate neighbourhood. She mentioned one name I had heard of the evening before; its owner was an acquaintance of Bob, a wonderful traveller, he had said, and rarely at home.

"Do they live here still?" asked the lady.

"Indeed, they do, ma'am," replied the other; "an' they're here now many and many a long day, an' good people they are, too."

"What is the Christian name of the present man,"

"Stephen, ma'am, or, I should say, miss."

"Ah, indeed, the old one," continued the lady, unheeding. "Strange," she added, turning to me, "how names are handed down from father to son. That name has been in the family, I dare swear, for more than a hundred years. They live at Hauteville?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"The present man, is he married?"

"Och, no, ma'am, he's young yet; he's always travelling, though he's at home now. I see him going to Macroom an hour ago."

"Does he keep many servants?"

"Wisha, no, only a cook an' the parlour-maid, an' she's sick down with her mother in the village. 'Tis a fine life they have; nothing to do but look after the house, an' everything provided, not as if they were on board-wages. I suppose you know the family, ma'am?"

"Yes," said the lady, "I know the family."

Jerry had now returned with the rod, and taking it I offered to dig out the object of her search, some variety of lichen or fern, as I imagined. She thanked me graciously though she did not accept my assistance; then quickly mounting the ladder and rapidly loosening with the spike of my rod a

few moss-covered stones, which fell clattering to my feet, I saw her pause, look round a second, and swiftly take a small packet from the slight cavity thus revealed. She lingered a little while and then descended, holding a spray of a small, fern-like plant, exclaiming with an air of triumph: "See, I have got it; the *asplenium trichomanes!* A very good specimen, too."

As we stepped out upon the bridge again a few drops of rain touched our faces; the sun was hidden by a passing cloud. The old woman, who seemed to be telling her beads under her apron, now approached us, and seeing that my companion made no motion to her pocket, I gave her a little gratuity for herself and the man, who had shambled back to work. The lady had turned away over the bridge and signalled me to follow her by a slight beck, while with a wave of her hand she bade farewell to the woman. To my astonishment, however, the latter, instead of locking the door, darted past me and approaching her uttered some guttural words in Irish. A shadow of deep displeasure crossed the lady's haughty face, but nevertheless she answered in what, I presume, was also Irish. Then followed an almost whispered colloquy, the lady moving backward slowly as if she wished to be as brief as possible, and holding a finger to her lips when she was not speaking.

Feeling a little awkward, I walked on, adjusting my rod, and in a moment my companion was at my side.

"You must come and have some refreshment,"

she said cordially. "What a strange old place that is! I know every stone in the walls. Come this way, so, over the stile, *merci!* We shall soon find shelter, though there is little need; the rain will soon pass off. Look, is not that lovely?"

We were on high ground now, and she pointed to the scene below, lit by the sun as he poured his beams athwart the falling rain until it resembled a shower of gold. "Ah," she said, drawing a deep breath, "I have often beguiled many a weary hour here; it reminded me of the Loire, the blue slates on the houses. It is an unfortunate country, sir, is it not? Beautiful in spite of its history, and its people. You English have drained its very life-blood."

"On the contrary, madam," I replied a little stiffly, "we have lost more than we have gained by our connection with the island; ever since the Union we have had more trouble than profit by it."

"Excellent!" she cried, lifting her eyebrows, and showing her small, white teeth, but rather as if she were applauding a bit of good acting than approving a sentiment. "The Union," she went on, "ah, yes, it was in the air a long time; you have no one like Mr. Pitt now, I fancy. Oh, it was well planned! Do the Irish plot to bring the French here still, and stone them when they come?"

I laughed outright. "There is no chance of that," I answered; "the ports are too well guarded. But the people have all reasonable liberty; they

can leave the country if they choose, and are doing so in droves."

"Then they never fight now?"

"Only, as usual, among themselves; our soldiers are frequently engaged in keeping their rival factions asunder. But to fight with us would be madness; we have thirty thousand men in the place, besides the police, Irishmen, too."

"Thirty thousand men!" she echoed. "And General Bonaparte had little more to conquer Piedmont and Lombardy! I begin to respect those people again." She put her finger to her lips and walked on. "Ah, I see now," she continued, "your method is better than the old plan of massacring them at intervals. You squeeze the country gradually, as they say the boa-constrictor squeezes his prey; at first the victim struggles, but soon it is all over. Yes, the modern way is better; it is quieter, and that is a great gain."

Now I am, I hope, a perfectly fair, open-minded man: I am accustomed to meet people of varying views and discuss their opinions, even when opposed to my own, in a spirit of toleration; but I confess to have been unprepared for such astounding ignorance or prejudice. I knew, moreover, something of the methods employed to foment patriotic agitation in the most distressful country, and I had scarcely patience to add politely: "I fear, madam, your sympathies have been imposed upon; you have not, evidently, seen our side of the question."

She shook her head with an airy laugh that dis-

solved my momentary irritation. "Ah, sir, but I have seen your side of the question. I have had excellent opportunities of judging for myself; you cannot have changed much since—*Allons!* We are arrived."

She pointed to a small country house close at hand, snugly ensconced in a grove which protected it on the north. "Come in, and allow me to offer you a little hospitality; it is the least I can do in return for all your patience and courtesy."

As she spoke we skirted a low wall tipped by laurels, and passing through a swing gate, found ourselves on a gravel path leading up to the door between the box-edged borders of an old-fashioned garden glowing with roses that lifted their beauty to the sun and breathed forth their perfume, as if in thanksgiving for the sweet shower that had starred their petals and sunk, cool and refreshing, to their roots. My companion paused a moment, drawing a deep sigh, so profound, so utterly pitiful, that I pray God I may never hear the like again. A richly-tinted clump of columbine detained her a moment, as she gathered a handful of its fantastic flowers. Then, running lightly up the steps before the door standing hospitably open, she bade me welcome to Hauteville.

"There need be no ceremony," she said, as we ascended the stairs; "I know the ways of the place, as the Irish say." On the first landing, however, she paused irresolutely between two doors at right angles, and then impulsively opened one, entering the room it led into with a step which grew more

assured as she advanced. The apartment was bright, cheerful, and comfortably furnished, though in a bygone fashion. Motioning me to a seat, she walked round the room, daintily touching a table here, a chair there, opening a cabinet or other knick-knack, uttering every now and then little exclamations of surprise and interest just as she had done in the ruin; then checking herself, she approached the chimney-piece where, among other things, was a silver bell. This she rang impatiently, I thought afterwards, and, with an apology to me, seated herself at a little recess near one of the windows.

Presently we heard steps on the stair outside, and a fat, round-eyed girl made her appearance.

"Ah, here you come at last," said my companion. "Why did you not go to the door when we arrived?"

"Sure, I didn't know you were here at all, ma'am," replied the abigail, evidently impressed by her interlocutor's authoritative manner. "I was in the kitchin."

"But that is just near the stairs."

"Oh, law, no, ma'am; it's at the top of the house, indeed, ma'am."

My hostess made a little gesture of impatience. "That is Mr. Stephen's doing?" she asked.

"Yes, ma'am, he had it put there a year ago."

"Well, he is master, and can do as he wills. Are you engaged here?"

"No, ma'am, I'm only takin' care of the house; I go away at night."

"Your master is in Macroom?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"So, now get us something to eat. I am Lady ——," she mentioned the family name. "But where is the cook?"

"Oh, the cook is in Cork, ma'am, but she'll be back soon; she left the keys out, for fear anybody would call."

The girl jerked the words out automatically, and then stood staring straight before her. The lady shrugged her shoulders. "I comprehend," she said slowly. "Stay, I will go with you and get what I want; I know where it should be. Pardon, sir, a moment."

She vanished with the girl, and, leaning back in my chair, I suffered my eyes to wander over the room. It was spacious, and must have run the entire length of the house. Its windows, enlarged and modernised, contrasted very favourably with the low, many-paned variety I noted in other parts of the establishment. The paintings which adorned it were mostly time-worn. Over the fireplace hung a spirited portrait of a full-blooded gentleman, dressed in the fashion of the eighteenth century. Time had cracked the scarlet of his coat and dimmed the light in his leering eyes; but the energy and distinction of his attitude, and the bold contour of the features, showed that in his day he must have been a bustling man of action, who probably, as occasion served, had hacked or intrigued his way to power among the mere Irishry. Near this picture was an unfinished sketch of a

bridge by Canaletto, while here and there were other paintings, some poor, some passable, of ladies in sacks and furbelows. At my elbow was a portfolio containing some excellent photographic views which I had begun to examine idly, when a light step and the jingling of glasses caused me to look up; my hostess had returned, bearing a tray with the materials of a tempting lunch upon it. In answer to my uncontrollable look of surprise, she said laughing: "I dared not trust those glasses to that clumsy girl; they are heirlooms; besides, I do not think she is accustomed to waiting on people, and I would prefer that we were *tête-à-tête*."

She had by this time, with my assistance, wheeled a little table near the window, and leaving me to arrange the tray, shut the door noiselessly. She paused, too, I could see, before a small mirror to take off her great hat and pass her hand over her abundant hair, humming lightly as she did so. Then she took a chair, filled me out some wine, and poured a little for herself into a tapering glass, which I was connoisseur enough to know must have been well-nigh priceless, so cunningly blended were its rainbow hues. She pressed me to eat and drink with the frank cordiality of a great lady who wishes to be gracious without becoming familiar, and kept up a conversation that sparkled like champagne in its flow of epigram and anecdote, though unfortunately I cannot recall a word of it now. Her own lunch, I could see, was, however, a mere pretence; and she watched me, in

spite of all her courtesy, with the air of one who longs to speak on a subject lying near the heart. Seeing this, I gradually slackened my gastronomic efforts, though not without a slight regret, for the lunch was really excellent and deserved every consideration.

As I filled a second glass and leaned back, she said: "I see there is no clock here; would you kindly lay your watch upon the table? I have something to say and to do." I did as she asked, and sat watching her, inwardly wondering what would come next. She bent her face above the watch a few moments and then raised it to mine, her wondrous eyes filled with a pitiful look of entreaty that cut me to the heart. "Madam," I said, speaking slowly, for I feared the wine had mounted to my head, "I shall be only too happy to be of any service."

She bowed as if she had been waiting for the words, and replied: "You can undoubtedly, sir, and what I require is not arduous."

I was younger then and more romantic than I am now, but I shall never repent of what I did; one hand lay on the table near my watch; I raised and kissed it. She looked at me with a slow puzzling smile that stole from mouth to eye; then she sighed again and glanced behind at the portrait over the mantlepiece. For a moment she seemed lost in thought, but, rousing herself, she drew from her breast the object I had seen her secrete them in the castle. It resembled very closely an old-fashioned cartridge-case, and was

evidently very old, the lacquered leather coming asunder in flakes around the corroded silver ornaments that once had adorned it. My companion examined the box carefully and then began to open it. The task did not prove an easy one; but at length, by passing a knife, at my suggestion, round the edges of the flap which had been ground and welded into the opposite side, she laid it open, and with the air of one who knows what to expect took out a packet wrapped in mouldering paper. This last broke away, and revealed within some closely folded parchment now yellow through time and exposure to damp.

I watched her with growing interest as she pushed aside the glasses and spread the document open upon the table, a document which seemed, with its dim, quaint lettering and formal flourishes, a legal instrument of some sort. The lady seemed, however, to find no difficulty in reading it, and when she had finished nodded her dainty head two or three times at the writing, as if it were the face of an old friend. "So!" she said, "it is just as you left it, *mon ami,* only a little time-worn, and a little late in the day." Then she raised her head eagerly, as if recollecting my presence. "Sir," she cried, "you offered me your service a while ago; well, this is what I require of you; it is not very exacting. I wish you," raising the document, "to post this deed to an address, which I shall give you, in the town of Cork. I may not do so myself, and no one but you can help me. Say, will you do it?"

She spoke so eagerly and with such intense

earnestness that I readily assented, though with a secret misgiving as to my companion's sanity. She sank back in her chair. "I thank you, sir," she replied, "and confide fully in the promise you have given me."

"It is a little thing, madam," I remarked when I had again pledged myself to act as she desired.

She shook her head. "There is nothing little in this life, sir," she answered. "That little thing of which you speak so lightly has been waiting nigh one hundred years to be accomplished." I felt my brain turning as she gazed upon me with those unfathomable eyes of hers. "What is it your English poet says?

> There are more things in Heaven and earth, Horatio,
> Than are dreamed of in your philosophy.'

She rose, and, going to a desk standing open by one of the windows, began tranquilly to search it, while I, having received a glance of permission, endeavoured to decipher the crabbed writing and legal terms of the weather-stained relic on the table. I could understand that it was a deed of gift of some lands in the barony of East Muskerry to one Sir Patrick O'Brien, having been made and provided so that the decree of outlawry against him should be revoked according to His Majesty's pleasure. Furthermore, the said Sir Patrick O'Brien was desired to place, or to cause this document to be placed, in the hands of two solicitors in Cork on or before a certain date therein specified. If this were not done, the property would once more revert to the Crown.

I had barely finished perusing the deed when the lady returned bearing a large envelope. Taking the document she folded it carefully in its narrow box, enclosing both in the stout linen-lined paper. Then, putting writing materials before me, she bade me address it to two names in a certain street in Cork. When I had finished, she took my watch from the table and sank, with what was almost a groan, into a chair by the window. "I have little time to spend with you, sir," she said, "but enough to explain to you, so far as explanation is necessary, my conduct to-day. I ask your attention to what I am about to say, but first take possession of that envelope; it will be more secure." I did as she requested, and drew my chair near hers. Then she began the following narrative, looking alternately at the watch and the lovely scene which lay spread before the window.

"You saw by the date of that deed that it is one hundred years old; and you have, I presume, seen the name in whose favour it has been drawn?" I bowed. "This gentleman," she continued, "belonged to the French forces, and those lands which were given him there were the mere wreck of a splendid patrimony lost by his ancestors through devotion to the Stuarts. Well, while invalided in Paris owing to a wound received during the campaign under Dumouriez in Belgium, this same Sir Patrick O'Brien was presented to a French lady, Stephanie de Liancourt. He soon professed a passionate attachment to her, which she returned, being then young, innocent, credu-

lous, and confiding. It was the year of Jemmapes. The gentleman was still young, but poor, and the lady, who had been left mistress of herself at too early an age, assisted him frequently with money. It is an old story. Her lover proved faithless, or she believed he did; and, having obtained a command in the new army of Italy, he departed quite suddenly from Paris to push his fortunes under General Bonaparte.

"With her heart hardened and her soul humiliated, this jilted girl faced the world. She disdained to pursue her lover with complaints or entreaties; indeed, being passably rich, she had many acquaintances who would have gladly become suitors, but she had ceased to believe in love. You can understand that, as she was an aristocrat, she had scant sympathies with the France which had risen on the ruins of the Bastille; and though her possessions were assured to her by those who ruled the destinies of the country, she determined to travel instead of retiring to her estates. Naturally, her thoughts turned to England. While there she met the man who afterwards became her husband. He was ambitious, needy, daring, and, as she found later on, as heartless as she believed herself to be. Being essentially a man of affairs, he soon gained her confidence by his judicious advice regarding her French estates, which she finally sold, and having married him she came to live in this very place.

"There never was perhaps a stranger marriage; there were no illusions on either side; there was no

love. The result was natural. Both went their several ways: the man sought power and rank, the twin deities of his soul; and the woman endeavoured to forget in insipid amusements the thoughts which burned in hers. You will admit it was not an enviable life.

"Well, as the years went by that woman's heart grew harder still. A dull, unreasoning hate rose up within her against the man whose summer love had brought her to this miserable plight, and she vowed revenge if ever occasion offered. Alas, fate ordained that they should meet again.

"One day she received an urgent letter beseeching her to grant an assignation to an old friend at a certain place in the neighbourhood. She recognised the handwriting; it was his, and you can comprehend with what warring emotions she gave consent. They met at the appointed spot, and looked once more into each other's eyes. They did not speak of love, though he with incredible folly, or impudence as she thought, alluded to the past, and conjured her to help him by its memory, adding excuses and explanations of which she then took no account. It seemed he had, through some signal service rendered while abroad to a relative of Mr. Pitt, obtained a pardon for former misdeeds and the assurance of the undisturbed enjoyment of certain lands yet remaining to the Crown as gifts; the conditions being, however, that the document authorising this should be lodged before a specified day in Cork with two gentlemen who had been commissioned to receive it. Unfortunately,

he compromised himself in the meantime by killing, at a chance encounter, a gentleman of position in the county, and, therefore, dared not enter the city until the affair should be adjusted. His prayer was that, as time pressed, and the matter was so important, she should place the deed you see there in the hands of those solicitors."

The lady drew a long breath, looked at the watch again, and resumed in what I thought was a weaker voice.

"What would you have? It was a man pleading to a woman he had wronged, to a woman whose heart had grown as hard as a nether mill-stone. She promised, but never meant to keep her word. They parted then—for ever. What became of him she knew not, but the deed remained where he had put it, where she knew he had hidden it lest it might be lost or destroyed in case of his arrest, until to-day. She went on with the old life, and the years passed; but gradually a pitiless longing, a hopeless regret, took the place of gratified hatred. She began now to believe the explanations O'Brien had given at their last meeting of his seeming abandonment of her, though at the time she had deemed them clever lies; and the remembrance that now it was too late for reparation embittered still more her joyless days. Think of it, sir! Remorse gnawed hourly at her heart; she had no guiding star of love or faith to light the way; she had no place in her little world, and youth itself was departing! Let me be brief; in desperation

she ended all one wild night from the parapet of Carrigadroghid Bridge."

The reciter paused again and turned the watch listlessly in her hand.

"That is a long time ago now, but it seems as if it were only yesterday. The distance between the bridge and the water is not great, and it was less then than at other times, for the river was swollen by recent rains; but before she reached the yellow flood she had repented, and she fought for life. Her struggle was vain, but not her repentance. *Inter pontem et fontem misericordia Domini!* Next morning her body was found on some rocks not far distant, where even in summer the river chafes in its narrow bed. Her husband gave it a magnificent funeral, and quickly married another wife. It is no matter. This day she was permitted to revisit the scene of her crime, and ease her tortured soul by carrying out the directions of him whom she had so basely betrayed. This could not be done without human assistance. Twice before in the century she attempted the task, but failed; to-day she has been successful, thanks to you. Yes, sir; Stephanie de Liancourt, the woman who has been nigh one hundred years dead and buried, speaks to you now and thanks you with the gratitude which only those can feel who may no longer help themselves."

Involuntarily I sprang to my feet; was she mad or was I? There she stood before me, a living, breathing woman, instinct with all that gracious loveliness which I have tried to describe. Never

in all my waking hours have I seen, or shall I see, anything so fair, so lovable, again; a gift from the gods to the hearth and the home of the man who could win her; and yet she was no longer of this world! I strove to speak, but my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth. She approached and handed me my watch, for she had risen also. I took it mechanically. "Do not try to speak, sir," she said gently; "I undertsand." Nevertheless, I forced some words from between my lips, what they were I cannot remember. She smiled, a tender pity in her unfathomable eyes, and held out her hand. "Adieu, sir," she murmured; "we must part now; but not for ever," she added, reading my thoughts, and an indescribable light coming over her face. "We shall meet again before you have said your last word to your King." I bent above the dainty hand, and then impelled by a resistless impulse moved away. At the door, however, I dared to turn and look back; yes, there she still stood under the red-coated portrait, one finger on her lip and the light upon her face!

I groped my way down the stairs like a drunken man, and it was not until I reached the open air that I recovered my mental equilibrium. My fishing-rod was in my hand, but I had no recollection of taking it from the stand in the hall; my hat was on my head, but I did not remember putting it there. My watch showed me that the luncheon-hour at my friend's house was past. I felt in my pocket, and drawing out the envelope I had re-

ceived in such strange circumstances, determined to post it immediately, just as if it had been a matter of ordinary experience. Accordingly, I trudged off to Coachford and there forwarded it to the given address, getting back in time for dinner.

II.

When I rejoined my friends I found that Mrs. Speedwell had been busy all day long with a sickly child, and that possibly she did not resent my absence from lunch, while Bob himself had only just returned. Instinctively I endeavoured to banish the memory of my adventure by chatting with him over our after-dinner cigars on the topics of the hour; but fate seemed unpropitious, for the unconscious Bob began to expatiate on the achievements and character of the traveller who lived at Hauteville. "He'll be at home to-morrow," said he, "and you must make his acquaintance. It may be useful to you in many ways; and if you can get him to talk, it will be nearly as good as a tour round the world. I'll pilot you over there to-morrow after breakfast." The conversation then drifted away to other subjects, and I quietly determined that I would see the matter out, and, if possible, probe the mystery to the bottom. Retiring soon after, I slept, contrary to my expectations, the dreamless sleep of exhaustion.

Next morning, disdaining the dog-cart, we strolled down over that bridge which was to me so memorable, taking almost the identical path my strange companion and I had followed the day before. "We'll go round by the road," said my

friend; "it will be a little more formal, but there is a short cut across there," he added, indicating the direction with the stem of his pipe, "just by that stile."

Following the road, we skirted the field and plantation I had traversed, and soon found ourselves in front of the house where I had been a guest. Up to that moment I confess to a slight hope that my companion must have meant some other dwelling bearing the name of Hauteville; but no, there was the very place; there were the wicket through which I had passed, the blooming parterres of roses, the hospitable door, and the sunlit hall. As in a dream I followed Bob across the walk, and heard him inquire for the owner; as in a dream I followed, when we were ushered into a bright breakfast-room on the ground-floor where the traveller and one or two other men were chatting over the remains of a late but substantial meal. The dogs, that lay here and there upon the skins covering the polished boards, raised their lazy heads to question our entry, but at a word from their master resumed their listless apathy. Bob, who knew the others, was received with a chorus of welcome, and I was presented formally to the company. The conversation which we had interrupted flowed on again, and I was forced to take part in it. They were fluent talkers those country squires, though the matter was not momentous or indeed specially important. Our host was cosmopolitan and catholic in his tastes; he had touched life at many points, and, furthermore, had the art of discussing the subject

in hand as if it were the only one he cared to converse on. He was still young, and had nothing of the languid affectations of speech or air that marked his companions. His face, remarkable rather than handsome, instantly suggested to me the portrait which I knew hung in the room above. There were the same keen eye, the same energy of attitude. Granting the portrait was that of an ancestor, the hereditary traits, which in the earlier and more troubled days had led the one to power and fortune, could be seen working out now through the love of travel and adventure in the descendant.

After a while the visitors took their departure, loitering along the walk in the brilliant sunshine and whistling to their dogs, our host going with them to the door. When he returned, we lounged by the window, talking of many common acquaintances, until, producing cigars, he proposed we should look over the stables and inspect a new polo-pony. We did so, spending altogether half-an-hour between them and the out-houses where he had some cows with astounding pedigrees. When we came back the conversation had drifted to painting, and he offered laughingly to show us his picture-gallery. "I keep the few things of value we have up-stairs," he said, leading the way; "but you must not expect anything striking; only a few ladies in brocade and the venerated founder of Hauteville. We have got some miniatures, however, which you may care to see."

As I expected, he ushered us into the room where I had lunched on the previous day, and with a

laugh pointed out to me the familiar paintings. He was in a gay mood and gave us many a quaint chapter of family history, as well as cynical character-sketches of the different painted ladies who seemed to frown back upon him from their canvas pillories; for I could see that his good sense had not guarded him from affecting an indifference towards rank and lineage, even while his manners and his bearing proclaimed the influence of both. He finished his description opposite the gentleman over the fire-place. "Now," he said, putting his hands in his pockets and his head on one side, "there you have as thorough-paced a rascal as the eighteenth century produced. When he was only twenty-three he ran away with a friend's wife, and afterwards ran the friend through in Spring Gardens by way of reparation. He was a bad son and a bad brother; his one aim in life was his own advancement, and he sacrificed to attain it any principles he ever possessed. He broke faith with friend and foe alike; he had a heart of stone and a will of steel; his one virtue was courage, and allied to a brazen, unabashed assurance, it carried him triumphantly through many an awkward place. At the heel of the hunt he died, not on Tyburn, but here, a baronet, rich in lands and honours, the husband in succession of the two loveliest women of their day; and I dare say he was as faithless to them as he was to everybody else. We had a portrait of the last Lady ——, a relative of Lord Broghill, the man who did Lord Muskerry out of Blarney Castle, in the preceding century; and like the rest of

her family she was no fool. She kept a pretty close eye on the baronet, they say, and outlived him in the end. Her picture, however, got damaged irreparably; but we have a very fair miniature of the first wife. Let us have a look at her."

He turned to a fancifully-carved cabinet, and, unlocking it, drew out a tray of small, circular leather cases; these he opened, and displayed a really valuable collection of miniatures from the pencil of more than one famous artist. The subjects were principally dead and gone beauties of the family, some of whom had trodden those very floors, ascended the stair outside, and passed forth one day never to return from their quiet resting-place beneath the elms in the churchyard beyond the hill. "Strange, I cannot find the Frenchwoman here," he said. "God only knows why she married him. There is quite a romance about her: she got drowned one evening in the Lee not many years after her marriage; and I have a shadowy memory of servants' talk about a ghost that used to haunt Carrigadroghid Bridge below in open daylight. Ah, I remember now; it's in the desk. I had it out yesterday; there is something wrong with the clasp."

He approached the writing-desk I had seen the previous day whence my hostess had taken the envelope, and turning on his heel muttered an oath. "As sure as I stand here, that girl goes to-day," he said, addressing us. "Just look at this! A man cannot leave anything unlocked near their curious paws." Lifting one of the covers, he

showed a mass of envelopes and note-paper tossed about in woeful confusion; but at the top I saw, framed in gold and lying open on the withered sprays of columbine, an exquisitely finished miniature of Stephanie de Liancourt, looking a little more girlish than when I had met her. Repressing his annoyance, our host took up the little painting and pointed out to us its beauties. The artist was, I believe, Fragonard; and he had caught with wonderful precision the matchless air of distinction I have alluded to, and fixed the radiant smile that must have made her the petted queen of many a *salon*.

"She had an old affair with a former lover, a Rapparee," said Bob's friend, gazing appreciatively on the gracious face, "and used to give him assignations. It is quite probable that she met her fate at his hands."

"Not at all, sir," I cried. "She threw herself from the bridge. There was another lover, but there was nothing dishonourable."

Both men stared at me. "And pray may I ask how you know?" asked our host with a touch of ice in his tones.

"She told me so herself, in this very room, yesterday," I answered.

Neither laughed as I expected. "Indeed?" observed our host with polite interest.

"Yes," I continued, wishing I had not spoken, but unable to keep silence. "Those withered flowers were placed there by her yesterday; I can show you the clump outside where she plucked

them. I,—I lunched with her here. I want to say,—I wish you to understand, that of all the women belonging to your family, there was not one purer or more unhappy. Her life was wrecked through a miserable misunderstanding; and whatever her faults have been, she has since expiated them."

My host looked at me thoughtfully and pulled the ears of a favourite setter that had cautiously ventured into this forbidden apartment in our wake.

"I would prefer you laughed," I said, lamely.

"I have no desire to do so," he answered. "I have learned enough of the world to know that the improbable, as well as the unexpected, happens."

"Will you do me the favour of calling your servant, and we shall put the matter to rest?"

He stepped back with a quick stride, and in Irish fashion called, "Hetty, Hetty!"

"Yes, sir," piped a distant voice.

"Come here at once." Steps sounded on the stairs, and the girl who had answered the bell the day before made her appearance again. I advanced. "This gentleman wishes to speak to you," said her master. The girl turned to me.

"Do you remember," I began with a sinking heart, for her face expressed no recognition, "do you remember that I called here yesterday, accompanied by a lady who spoke to you and got lunch from you?"

"I don't, sir."

A cold perspiration burst forth upon my forehead. "Think," I continued, "I was sitting at

that side of the room, and you said the master was in Macroom and the cook in Cork; and,—and—the kitchen had been put to the top of the house. Don't you recollect?"

"Indeed, then, I don't, sir; I never laid eyes on you in my born days until now. I didn't see any lady here at all, at all; though what you say about the house is right enough."

I stared hard at her, but she met my glance unflinchingly. Truth-telling is the virtue of an unimaginative people, and the Irish are not wanting in imagination; but I had not expected this, even in Ireland. Either the girl was the most consummate actress who ever played a part, or I was the victim of a jugglery of eye and ear unparalleled in the history of hallucination. It was impossible, I told myself, that I could have been mistaken; she was identically the same girl, but a little less sleepy-looking than the day before. Turning my head, I saw Speedwell's anxious face at my shoulder.

"Did you go near that desk?" asked the master after an awkward pause.

"No, sir," I never did such a thing," replied the girl proudly, with unmistakable signs of coming tears.

"That will do; you may go."

We went back into the room, and my host began to chat of other things; but I noticed that his voice and Bob's had grown graver, and that, when they addressed me they did so in a deferential tone which annoyed me unspeakably. Another man

would probably have dismissed the subject, but I clung to it. The owner of Hauteville behaved splendidly. Not only did he continue affecting to take me seriously, but he patiently wrote out at my suggestion an account of what had taken place, with the exception of the incident of the deed, which I felt that I could not refer to without breaking confidence. I described minutely the coloured glasses from which I had drunk; and after a search they were found, carefully put away in a cabinet opened by the cook's keys, that functionary playing the part of housekeeper in the establishment. I had, too, one grain of comfort in the fact that my host seemed impressed by the position of the miniature on the flowers.

When we took our departure, Bob proposed that we should return to his house by a much more circuitous route than that by which we had come; but I insisted on crossing the bridge, and by rare good luck we found my old guide of the previous day in attendance on a party of tourists who were killing half-an-hour by gaping at the ruined walls of Una's castle. When they had gone, I hastened after the woman as she hurriedly put the key in her pocket and turned away evidently desirous of avoiding me, and brought her to an abrupt halt. "Look here, Bob," I cried; "you may think what you like of my story, but there is the woman who, of her own accord, questioned the lady on this bridge. Do you remember me?" I said, addressing her.

"I do, of course, your honour."

"Thank God! Do you recollect the foreign-looking lady who was with me?"

"What lady, your honour?"

"The woman to whom you spoke in Irish."

She glanced from me to Bob and blessed herself. "Yeh, the Lord between us an' harm! That was no woman; 'twas a banshee!"

"How did you know?"

"Yeh, 'tisn't for the likes of me to be talking of them things to the likes of you, sir; but sure she had no shadow."

"No shadow!"

"No; don't you remimber she kept in the shade of the wall, an' only kem out when the sun was behind a cloud? Maybe you didn't, for you were lookin' at her face all the time, an' small blame to you," she added, the triumph of her sex twinkling in her sunken eyes.

"No shadow!" I echoed. "Good Heaven, I took her hand in mine; it was as real as your own."

The woman smiled pityingly. "Sure you thought that, sir; you felt and saw as she willed. When I strike that stone," she continued, touching one of the moss-patched slabs on the parapet of the bridge with her crooked fingers, "I feel it hard an' real, don't I? Well, if it wasn't there at all, but only an image of it, an' if I felt it hard an' cold to my hand all the same, wouldn't it be real to me?"

"Egad, we're in for a lecture on metaphysics," cried Bob. "This is what comes of the higher education of women."

"There's a man down there," continued the crone, "a brother of Jerry Downey's, an' his leg had to be cut off last year because it was caught in a machine at the O'Learys'. He was very bad intirely, an' I sat up with him a couple of nights. Well, that man used to wake screeching from the pain in his foot an' toes—the foot an' toes, mind you, of the leg that was cut off an' wasn't there at all, at all. 'Yeh, Mat,' I used to say, 'don't be goin' on like that; sure it's only your imagination.' 'Yerrah, hould your tongue, woman,' he'd say back to me; '*honam-an-dhoul*, don't I feel it!'"

She moved on a few paces. I put my hand on her arm. "Listen to me," I cried. "You talked for a couple of minutes; what was it you said to her in Irish, and what did she say to you?"

"I can't tell you that, sir," the woman replied with a certain dignity. "I spoke to her in Irish so that you might not understand, like the way you spoke to her, too, I suppose; an' well she knew what I was sayin'. She told me she learned it here in this part of the country. She said she meant no mischief to you, an' that's all I may say. So I wish ye both good-day, an' may the Lord have us all in His holy keepin'. Sure they're well kept whom God keeps!"

This pious remark closed the conversation, for the woman, with a curtsey, turned suddenly into a neighbouring house, thus effectually putting an end to further questioning. We went on in silence, strolling home by the river that ran shimmering on to Oakgrove with its wood-crowned slopes. I

could see my companion was abstracted, perhaps annoyed, by my conduct at Hauteville; our interview with the woman had probably restored his belief in my sanity, but he still wore a sorely puzzled air. For my own part I was not surprised by the woman's tranquil acceptance of the situation. I knew enough of Ireland to be aware that many a question which might give the Psychical Research Society pause would be settled offhand by an Irish peasant, to whom nothing in the supernatural order is impossible or incongruous.

"One thing I must ask you, Dick," Speedwell observed, when we had discussed the matter at length. "Don't say anything about this spirit-rapping business to Ethel; she may be more susceptible than we."

"Have no fear on that score," I replied, "for I shall probably be on the road to-morrow, and no doubt shall soon forget the Lady of the Castle; London is not propitious to ghosts."

Bob laughed, feeling, I knew, relieved, although he insisted on my staying another day to see Gougane Barra; which I did, in a blinding wintry mist that made its squalor and loneliness more awful still, until in my wrath I said that all guide-books were liars, and an Irish guide-book the king of them all.

For my own part, I wished to get away some short time before my leave expired, so that I might satisfy myself on some important points in this strange experience. Reaching Cork next day at noon, I broke my journey there, and made inquiries

for the solicitors to whom I had posted the envelope at Coachford, but could learn nothing about either themselves or the street in which they resided. Struck, however, by my earnestness, one of those whom I consulted, a solicitor himself, introduced me to a quiet, gentleman-like man who I understood had made the history and development of the city a special study. On learning my wants he took me to his office, and producing a few maps of Cork searched them carefully but unsuccessfully. "I see," he muttered, "it must go back before 1800." The next map we consulted was of an earlier date, and in it we found the street I sought. My friend pushed his spectacles over his forehead, and looking at me began to laugh silently. "I am not surprised, sir," he said, "that you failed in your search. That street has been renamed, and instead of being the fashionable thoroughfare it once was is now inhabited only by the saddest class of the poor, those who still hide their poverty under the garb of shabby gentility. But your solicitors, we have a fair clue to them. Will you kindly hand me down that calf-bound volume on the second shelf? Thanks; it is a directory compiled in the year in which the map was published; I bought it at a bookstall for a few pence." He opened the work, ran his finger down an alphabetical list of names, and triumphantly read out to me those I required, together with the number of their place of business in the street mentioned.

My kindly helper would have detained me with much information of antiquarian interest, and in-

deed offered to show me the place in question, but my mind was full of another idea If the names were genuine, then, after all, I had sent a real letter, and it should be now awaiting me at the Cork Post Office. Excusing myself, I hurried off to make inquiries there, leaving my scholarly friend in what he must have thought an ungrateful manner.

I cannot describe the frenzy of impatience with which I waited while the search for the letter was being prosecuted, for on it seemed to depend the last test I could apply to the truth of my adventure. At length an official returned bearing some envelopes, and among them I instantly recognised mine. The address, he explained, could not be found, and the letter being opened in due course, the contents were discovered, a little damaged. Trembling with eagerness, I almost snatched the precious packet from him, and hastening to my hotel extracted from the box, which almost went to pieces in my hands, the memorable enclosure; but the parchment, that a few days before had looked comparatively fresh, had since faded to a muddy yellow which was torn in places, the very envelope which enclosed it being now more durable than this poor relic of the stormy past. Still, I could decipher the writing, and was thus able to identify it.

While poring over the sheet a sudden thought came to me. Why not deliver the document yourself? Carry out her wish so far as human effort may. I determined to do so.

I was to leave the city that night, and whatever

I did must be done at once; so securing the letter and throwing on my hat, I again sought my painstaking acquaintance. I found him about to leave his office on the South Mall. Apologising for my sudden disappearance, I reminded him of his offer to show me the street I wished to find. Displaying a patient courtesy, which I now remember with a two-fold gratitude since his place knows him no more, he consented, and hiring a jingle, or canvas-covered car, we skirted the river and its shipping, turned off through thoroughfares alive with traffic, and then rattled along over lonely, miserable streets intersected by alleys more squalid still. At one of these the driver pulled up, and we alighted. Desiring the man to wait, my guide led me through a tangle of evil-smelling lanes into another deserted street, one side being a long wall apparently enclosing some manufacturing premises. "Houses stood there once," said my companion; "but the site is occupied by that wall and those yards beyond. However, you can see here of what fashion they must have been."

He pointed to a dreary line of neglected mansions that even still in their decay retained something of the strength and dignity which had marked them in their day of pride. Some were approached by flights of steps where ragged children were playing with the unconquerable cheerfulness of the Celt; others had deep, boldly-moulded porches of limestone that yet mocked time and change; all bore the ineffaceable stamp of former prosperity. My friend had spoken truly when he called the place

shabby-genteel. There were no slatternly women lounging at the doors; nor was there any of the loud-voiced negro-like gaiety of the adjacent lanes, though many furtive and timid glances scanned us from behind the pitiful cracked flower-pots on the window-sills. A broken-looking man, clad in rusty black, crept up the steps before a house, and we saw a poor pinched woman greet him with the phantom of an embrace. We had here under our eyes the stage on which is played the tragi-comedy of genteel misery that makes its last stand in its last ditch. I had often laughed at Irish poverty; but in this silent, forgotten spot, the grave of so many hopes and dreams, it took another character which did not lend itself so readily to farcical tradition; and it seemed as if I could hear the Frenchwoman asking me inconsequently: "Is your land altogether innocent of this?"

Remembering her packet I muttered an excuse, and mounting to the door of the most deserted-looking house on pretence of examining the tarnished plate thereon, slipped the document, with half-a-crown for the lucky finder, through one of the partly opened windows.

That is all. I feel keenly my inability to gather together the various strands of this narrative, weave them into one, and present the reader with a neatly rounded conclusion; but experience shows us daily, in affairs of far more common occurrence, that it is often futile to theorise and impossible to explain. It would seem, indeed, as if my extraordinary adventure, with its sharply contrasting contradictions

and improbabilities, was designed expressly to show how utterly the human intellect may be baffled when it strives to rend the invisible veil which hides from us the Spirit Land whither we are all journeying. For myself, I have long since renounced all attempts at a solution; I am simply content to believe what I have set forth. Some days later I heard the familiar roar of London, and ere long the lonely Irish castle in the Irish stream was lost behind the flooding cares of this work-day world. But there are times still when I find myself once more beneath its shadow and face to face with the loveliest woman it has been my lot to meet; and I think of her last words, and wonder when and how we shall meet again.

A HANGING JUDGE.

He had been a hanging Judge, and was now a spirit. The process of becoming one had been attended by the usual elements of inconvenience, and the mode of his departure from this world of woe eminently respectable, a cold caught in the discharge of his official duties, as the newspapers euphemistically put it, being the remote cause of his flitting to the Shadow Land.

He was a thoroughly religious man—a practical Christian, as the cant goes—and in his obituary notices the aforesaid journals were kind enough to insinuate that if ever a soul faced the Dark Valley in good case, his did.

Personally, I believe the man had a pretty constant conviction he would go to Heaven—ultimately; and, indeed, if one regarded only his private character, this expectation would not seem preposterous. He had been a good son, a faithful husband, a provident father. A hard-worker always, first from necessity, latterly from choice, he was not addicted to the popular vices which make those who knew us during our earthly pilgrimage a little better than our sorrowing relations, smile through their tears as they read our epitaphs.

On the contrary, this just Judge was rather a

model man, partly from a native hardness of disposition—I shall not say heart—and because he had observed the prizes of life rarely went to the lovers of wine or women.

So it happened that, as he stood before the Judgment Seat, since I must express myself in terms of experience, but in reality before a viewless, formless Essence perceivable by the intellect alone, Asmodeus and his rabble crew of mocking demons fell back a moment, abashed. Such is the power of purity, even though its quality be not of the highest.

But soon an accusing Shape lifted itself from the ruck of the fiends, and cried aloud, hot upon the last words of the soul's well-meaning Angel, who had just closed a pretty fair specimen of special pleading—

"Eternal Being, poise thy scales afresh; I charge this thing with murder, foul and unrepented!"

The Judge's soul lifted its brow in the awful searching light which threw no shadow, and cried aloud, possibly by an automatic act of the intellectual memory, "Not guilty!"

But the great scales above, in which are weighed the deeds of men and the motives of them, did not cease to rise and fall with a terrible rhythmical motion, nor could the most experienced cherub of them all tell how the oscillation should cease. Sometimes it had gone on until the maddened soul prayed for damnation, as men here pray for death, rather than endure the suspense; and, again, that mighty beam, fit axis for a world, had quivered but

once, and fixed eternally the soul's fate. For every single child of Adam there had been a separate standard, and never any two alike.

The Titanic Shape that had sprung forth now raised its sable wings, and with their winnowing cleared a space before the scales.

"This man was on earth a Judge," it cried, "and for the sake of his pay and position among men administered falsely the laws, and wrenched from their purposes the principles of Justice. He doomed fellow men to death on evidence so tainted that it might have reeked in the nostrils of slaves, so that it might be said by his masters, 'We take a life for a life.' This he did, not from hate or revenge, but in cold blood—an item of his hire, no more; and for this I here brand him murderer as I branded Cain!"

At those awful words, a dull, distant, ravening yell, like the cries of ten thousand beasts and the roaring of many flames, rose into the Judge's consciousness, the pitiful angels hovering near on curving pinions trembling to the very pen-feathers of their gorgeous wings.

"Call the witnesses for the prosecution," gasped the shivering soul, who now began to grasp the appalling fact that it was Judge——, Judge in its own case; and with the words there rose before it a glorious apparition, light-smitten, light-permeated, light-diffusing, a wondrous spectacle, drawing all hearts, bowing all intellects, and honoured, the Judge could see, in Hell as well as Heaven, for at her coming the haughty Shade

which had accused him veiled its lofty brow one fleeting instant ere it cried, "Behold my witness; when she has spoken, thou wilt not ask another."

The Judge's soul gazed its fill, for not in all its memories had it recollection of aught so beautiful, so awe-inspiring, and the Judge's soul yearned to her, and he cried aloud, "Oh, who art thou?"

She smiled a pitying smile that pained the trembling spirit more than even the mocking laughter of the fiends which underscored the question; then she answered, "My name is Justice."

There was silence for a little space, the demons having ceased to laugh.

"I am," she continued, looking slowly round, "the Daughter and the Handmaid of God. Hast thou never heard my name on earth?"

And the Judge whispered, "Yes."

"It were strange if otherwise," she replied; "for men have called upon me in all ages and all climes; I have been invoked by every tongue that men have spoken since Time began; and as it was in the beginning so it shall be to the end; yet thou dost not know me, and it was in my name thou wroughtest thy sin!"

The Judge had been a brave man; his friends said he had never known fear, that he was as steeled to danger as any red-coated trooper who rode at his side when he swept from town to town vindicating the outraged majesty of the Law. But now his soul quivered with a terror no words can tell, and it fainted away even as water from a sieve before the presence of that beautiful yet awe-inspiring shape

whose pity was more terrible than the laughter of the fiends.

But his good Angel, lifting her splendid wings, cried aloud: "He administered only the Law of the Land in such cases made and provided, as he had sworn. He never took pay for false judgment; he never stayed thy arm that the poor might suffer and the rich go free!"

But the Fiend shrieked back: "He did! he did! His rank and pay were the bribes—thus only could he hold them! O Thou who art, who has been, and who shall be, I claim this man's soul! His was not the crime of ignorance or of passion; he knew all—the packed jury, the paid informer, the suborned evidence, the suppressed truth. Those were the loaded dice with which he gambled away the lives of men. O Justice, to thee I call, to thee in whose presence even I bow! Answer if in this I lie; speak, if thou darest, and say this soul is free!"

But Justice was silent.

The wondrous light that never shone on earthly things began to wax strangely dim; there were vast, unfathomable chasms, a rolling, murky chaos, surging beneath the soul; and new sounds, too, broke upon its consciousness, rising upward from the still receding, yawning depths alive with monstrous shapes, so that the angels shuddered as they drew aside like summer friends from a ruined man.

The great scales wherein are weighed each man's deeds and the motives of them were still moving, but so slowly that one could scarce call it motion;

but, alas! the golden bowl was outweighed by the iron one which ever holds the crimes of men.

Above, the great shining gates of Heaven fell ajar, and, beyond, the soul caught glimpses of what no mortal eye has seen—a glory so wonderful that the intellect could not wish further, else it were not Paradise. In a moment it realised the beauty of Truth, the sanctity of Justice, the surpassing loveliness of Love, and saw in one dazzling flash, as all men shall see, the radiant splendour of the realities they had known here but by their names and shadows.

Maddened by the sight, the soul made one last effort.

"Let the witnesses for the defence be called!" it shrieked in extremest anguish, and all Hell shrieked louder at that cry.

But lo! forth from the gates ajar came another celestial form, so like the first that the Judge could not distinguish until the two fronted each other in those awful lists, and then they wore the semblance of two sisters. But, if the first was beautiful, the second had for the soul of this mortal a loveliness more radiant still. Standing there, she recalled every image of tenderness and ruth the soul had ever known; her eyes were sweetly human and soft as summer dew, her adorable form surpassed the fairest that had ever been worn by the daughters of men, and her very presence was peace itself. Behind her came another form, less bright, in mortal guise, and the face, transfigured through it was, appeared familiar to the Judge.

The lovely lady seemed to have led back the light of Heaven; the murky thunder-clouds rolled asunder, the roar of Hell grew less, the taunting sneer died upon the lips of Satan, but he did not bow his head.

"Oh, who are thou, heavenly maid?" cried the Judge's soul in quavering tones. "Wilt thou also condemn me? If I have sinned in thy name, too, let me know, and bid me go to the fiends!"

The gentle lady smiled, and it seemed the smile was reflected from the brows of Justice.

"I am Mercy," she said simply. "O mortal, hast thou never known me? I and my sister yonder," she went on, pointing to Justice, "search the souls of men, and oftentimes it happens that those who have not known one of us on earth will recognise the other here, having served her there; but thou, unhappy man, thou knowest neither."

"The Law, the Law, I but obeyed the Law," gasped the Judge's soul.

"The Law," echoed Justice; "the Law is our handmaid; wilt thou plead our servant's word for the wronging of us?" And Justice lifted her glittering sword.

"Will none plead for me?" moaned the Judge, no longer Judge now, but only a shivering human soul, with Heaven in sight and Hell lowering at its shoulder-blade.

"I will, yer haner!" said the shape that followed Mercy.

The words were almost drowned by another mocking shout from the demons, and in that yell

the irony of Hell found vent. The transfigured man moved forward until he stood between Justice and Mercy. The Judge, as if fascinated, gazed piteously at the newcomer, and then almost fainted again, for he now saw the face of the glorified man was the face of one he had known on earth, a face he had watched, it may have been, with a thrill of pity, day by day over the iron spikes of the dock in his Court, a face that had stared hopelessly into his when, assuming the black cap, he had doomed the man standing before him to death in the name of outraged Law. Yes, he recollected now—the charge, the doubtful evidence, the directions to the jury straining for the hint—all, even to the solemn words with which he closed the gigantic farce, and the Judge hung his head before the "Criminal."

"I'm willing to give me evidence," continued the peasant soul. "I was a poor man an' an ignorant one; an' a crime was committed in my district, an' the right man couldn't be found, so they pitched on me an' thought they'd hang me for an example. Them that did this had wives an' children to feed, an' promotion to get; so I was accused of murder, an' the wink went round an' I was hung; for, sure, the gentlemen an' the understrappers should have something to show for the money they were drawing. God help us!"

Mercy averted her head, Justice frowned, all Hell fairly shrieked at the sardonic humour of the situation, and a damned wit screamed from his bed of fire, "Cui prodest scelus, is fecit!"

"But, sure, I didn't come here to say the hard

word agen him," continued the spirit. "Maybe I wouldn't be here at all, at all, but for him; sure, he gave me a month to prepare for death, an' that's more than most get, I'm thinkin'. Sure he didn't want to hang me himself—only just in the way of business; an' 'tisn't meself 'ud stand in his way now if that's all ye have agen him."

"That is all," murmured Satan, bowing low; "a very simple thing."

"Sure, I wasn't of much account, anyway," the shade went on, disregarding the interruption. "I was only a poor, ignorant man, an' that's why they marked me down to die; for someone should go, an', if it wasn't the right man, they'd take the next man to him. I don't remember it ever bein' any other way—it's the custom of the counthry, you see, an' he isn't half so much to blame as ye think; so lave him come in, Miss Mercy; sure, I forgave him long ago, an' 'twas I suffered most."

The spirit came closer to the Judge's side, but, with that grotesque fitness of character which had individualised it from the first, did not dare to take the great one's hand. The Judge was not so consistent; forgetting his dignity, he strove to cling to the "convict" shade, and cried aloud, "Don't leave me! See, they are coming for me! Mercy, Mercy!"

"I do wish you would not contract that habit of falling asleep after dinner," observed a cultivated but rather pettish voice, which the Judge had never before heard with so much joy, as he opened his eyes and realised he was still a living man;

"you have been dozing for the past two minutes, and making such frightful faces! What on earth have you been dreaming about?" continued the matron, closing her novel and touching the bell. "You certainly did not seem amused. . . . . Had it anything to do with those wretched Courts?"

"Yes," answered the Judge quietly, "it had."

"And it wasn't funny! Most of the cases you try seem to have at least that compensation."

"Most of the things which occur in our Courts are rather funny than otherwise," replied her husband, for the spirit of Truth was in him yet; "but the humour, I think, depends very much upon the point of view."

The lady laughed, and gave the servant some orders.

"The joke did not seem on your side just now, at any rate," she remarked, settling herself in her seat again. "But tell me all about it."

He did so.

"Ah, well!" observed his wife when he had finished, "it certainly was a rather curious dream. I wonder what could have caused it? Possibly that celery-sauce. I must give the cook notice; she is most irregular. If I were in you place I should think no more of it, for, after all, it is only a dream."

"But you are not in my place, unfortunately," murmured the Judge; "and it is a dream which may come true some day."

The dame laughed again, stifling a yawn.

"Well, if it should come true," she answered briskly, "I am sure it is a most reassuring thing for you to know those sort of people are so forgiving, and, if you were to stop hanging them now and then, *pour encourager les autres*, somebody else would be only too happy to step into your shoes, and perhaps be far more firm. Indeed, the hanging portion of it seems to me," her ladyship went on as the footman replenished the fire, "well, quite in the order of things, and, in short, simply a part of the Administration."

AN SPRE—THE DOWRY.

NORA FINN was employed at a factory of the City of the Marsh; she had been keeping company with Con MacCarthy, a neighbour who lived a little below the Lough "chapel," as people who recollect the time when a Catholic church existed by sufferance style that artless edifice of red brick trimmed with limestone, and matters were progressing at leisurely pace towards matrimony when an event of cataclysmical proportions threatened to rend asunder the easy path they followed.

An English nonentity, named Prye, had been assigned a minor part in the dreary farce of Irish Government. As he enjoyed the confidence of his wife, a typical English lady, she announced her intention of helping him, and, on their arrival in the South, decided to win the esteem of the Corkonians by a passionate interest in local manufactures. The pastime proved less expensive than "bridge," and she looked destructive in a motor cap.

Nora Finn's position in the factory correlated with Lord Prye's in Irish affairs—people asked conundrums of both, and if they had compared notes, their system of answering would have exhibited a speaking likeness. During Lady Prye's visit the girl was quoted as an authority by the half-

articulate sub-manager who, renting a section of terrace-front at Tobar-an-Righ-Domnaig, was, therefore, cursed with an accurate sense of social altitudes, while Nora, who dwelt amid the mere Irish, was socially so non-existent that she contemplated the stirring scene with the desert-like calm which is the compensation of the supernumerary on Life's pageant. This very characteristic attracted Lady Prye, who secretly thought her the sub-manager's lawful wife, and with that tact which the London sixpennies declared made her royally famous, she asked Nora to accompany her over the establishment.

This constituted the maiden's opportunity. Those privileged to hear her explain the difference between a Foxford blanket and a Blarney tweed, or gently differentiating a bobbin from a cog-wheel, with the air of one who received, not imparted, information, declare her control of feature to have been phenomenal.

Had Lady Prye guessed the impression she made on the demure girl shepherding her attention she would have been much more self-satisfied, for although Nora, by virtue of what was born in her, saw through the other's little soul at the first glance, and knew her body to be but some angles of anæmic flesh, nevertheless, the effect for which women pray had been achieved. Even when Lady Prye said in all sincerity "I awsk because I want to know," Nora laughed neither in her face nor her sleeve, so well was innate stupidity masked by precision of accent and glamour of tone. Again, the

cut of the motor cap, the elegant ungainliness of the bebuttoned jacket, the skirt so innocently suggestive of what was not, the gleaming finish of the shoes revealed when that skirt was bunched in a surpassingly stylish manner, above all, the masterpiece of kid, modelling to extrinsic beauty the hand which caught the skirt, had a cumulative power upon the soul of the dark-eyed colleen, who saw things without looking at them, whose intuition would have made her a personage in Lady Prye's world in less time than it took Lady Prye to learn the opening of a door or the telling of a lie.

The hands got half a day—at their own expense, Nora went home to the Lough, the pattern of the motor cap in her eye, dreams in her heart.

After a hasty meal she set to work, having for materials the remnant of a Sunday breeches belonging to Dan-Jo, her brother, who died a year before, hitherto preserved with pious care by their mother for a patch-work quilt to grace her own "laying-out." To create the crown she excised that of her father's napless "beaver," which the decent man had already promised to Billy Duggan, the cobbler, without a word of protest from Mrs. Finn, who sat at her darling's feet and beguiled the labour by talking Peerage. Nor was Nora's fancy idle as she worked. She saw herself a "real lady," attired, body and soul, in drab, and wedded to a nebulous potentiality. Celtic imagination refused to array Con in a frock coat and "topper." But he flashed before her as he bounded into her affections at the great Gaelic hurling match in the Park—where

frock coats avail not! The details were painfully visible; she noted the "reef" under the arm where the "ganzy" had given, and the colophon of civic mud on the "geers," memorial of a collision with Micky-O, the Cuchulain of the opposing party, who lived three doors away. At the moment she had cheered with the crowd, the ball, under the impact of a terrific blow, sailing skyward to victory! Con told her afterwards he had recognised her voice. Now, she did not mentally cheer the vision of Con, light of heart and lighter of breeches. She blushed hotly at the very terms of her thought, "geers," "Mick-O," how insufferably vulgar! The passion for refinement, distinction; the inalienable, imperishable longing of the Celt was waking within her, and for exemplar she had—Lady Prye.

Con MacCarthy was in better spirits than usual that evening. He had got an expected "rise," and strove, poor fellow, to be brilliant in Irish. They had compacted to conduct their wooing in the tongue which should have been the most natural in the world; but although both could boast proficiency, Nora's replies savoured of the Third O'Growney this evening, and Con's gentle raillery Nora did not take graciously; he had not noticed the motor cap, and she could not talk about Lady Prye in Irish. So, while he was gathering a nosegay of field flowers she leant disconsolately over the rails bordering a convexity on the Togher Road, and wished she had been born a Protestant.

On his return she strove honestly to rouse herself, but her pre-occupation rose like a wall between

them, and, as if awakening from a trance, she suddenly found herself confronted by the questioning anxiety in Con's face.

"Nora, acushla," he asked, "Caw thaw ort? There you are, after dropping my flowers!" And he showed her some fronds of fern mingled with lusmore bells, fragrant, too, with sweet woodbine.

"Oh, did I?" she answered, taking them negligently, "Wisha!"

Con's face fell. "Sure if you didn't want them, why did you let me gather them?" he said, "a man doesn't know where he is with you, Nora."

Her eye flashed. "He may have to know where he is without me," she replied, pausing in the middle of the road.

"Do you mean that?"

"I do. If I didn't I wouldn't say it."

He looked at her steadily, and began to weigh present words against past deeds. She was angry now—with him, with herself, with Lady Prye, with the world. It was the moment of tragedy!

A voice was speaking behind them in the tender dusk, a clear, golden voice, and the unfamiliar familiarity of the speech held them both breathless. Deeper tones, infinitely weary, answered; there was talk about a road leading to some place whose name they had never heard; they caught a word here and there. "Togher," for instance, they understood, but "Tobar" brought no local allusion to their minds. The two listeners heard the sharp tang of resilient metal, the stamp of horse hoofs. It reminded Con of the creak Tom Donovan's side-

car gave when pretty Mrs. Donovan leaped off last Sunday at the "chapel" gate.

The lovers were on the road from Togher, just where it climbs a little ascent, bordered on one side by a rudely-built stone wall, and on the other by a tangle of ragged hedges and a confusion of enclosures. In the distance, to the left, is Frankfield and its low hill, rath-crowned. In front run the flattened curves of two other hills rolling up to the horizon from the undulating valley. On an overcast day, when the veering fan of sun-rays touches feature after feature lovingly, one comprehends its subtle beauty. Going down the road, from the Lough, at this very point, you have a hope that a rich scene is about to burst upon you, and it is with a sigh of disillusion the corner is turned.

At this point the two stood silent. Both had a growing sense of the precipice whither the short, straight path of their sudden quarrel was leading when that enchanted voice had stayed their feet. The birds of Aengus were fluttering in their faces, but neither would take the first step away. They preferred to wait, looking backward down the road. And as they looked, two beautiful white steeds silently rounded the curve.

Beautiful they were, and worthy the driver, a fierce, scarlet-clad, handsome thing of arching chest and sinewy limb, the hair tumbling free from beneath the cap of wool, or braided like the horses' manes and tipped with golden balls. A torque of gold encircled the haughty neck, and golden

circlets glittered on the brown arms, flexed a moment as he grasped the hand-rail and turned his weary face to the pale light of a star in the northern sky. But they forgot him in wonder at the scintillating splendour of the car. The wheels did no' rattle. On looking down, Con saw they were passing over grass that lapped every immediate spot of ground, for road and wall had vanished. Instead, the fringe of a forest showed dark, massed centuries of trunk, and leaf-clad bough that never had known a British axe, never had echoed the whine of a Puritan psalm.

A woman was ascending the slope in the track of the chariot, the train of her silver-shot robe over one polished arm, a nobler woman than either had ever seen tread the polluted soil of Eire. Serpents of flexile gold coiled over the whiteness twixt shoulder and wrist. Her hair was living gold indeed, and no shadow could find rest there. The lappet of the kilted robe showed an under-skirt of saffron dye, beyond the art of fingers stiffened with the tracing of mechanical dulness, beneath it her little shoes glittered. Under the perfect loveliness of her ears jewelled gold was glinting, and her low, white forehead was arched by gems.

She went with a certain hesitancy of step, but like the charioteer held her way past them. At the same moment two of the largest hounds Con Mac Carthy had ever seen came galloping neck a neck over the green with interlaced windings of strength and speed. Con hailed one; the creature approached him slowly, though not in obedience to

the call, but stalking before Nora, uttered a low, questing whine. The woman, from whose splendid attire the girl could not unloose her eyes, glanced back and halted, her beautiful face touched by a faint surprise. Con lifted his cap, she bowed. The dogs ran forward again, and circled round her as she stood there waiting. With instinctive courtesy Nora and Con advanced. She rested one jewelled hand, knuckle inward, above one noble hip, and let fall the shimmering robe. She was breathing lightly, her deep breast heaving, her dark brows lifted, a bitted anxiety restive in her grey eye. The charioteer had stayed the horses.

The three looked upon one another, and to Nora came a persuasive, bewildering sense of kinship, a shyness saved from shame by a growing awe and a waking pride. Closer now, she found herself observing with intelligent sympathy the lady's dress, a sight not given to the eyes of to-day, where glowing rose and timid gold of dawn were shot by the dazzling white of morning seas, miraculous, too, with blazoned fancies—a dream of Moy Mell woven to the music of harp strings.

To have clothed Lady Prye in such a dress would have been as brutal as to subject her husband to the tests of the Fianna. Nora Finn would have blushed if some hours earlier a clarion voice had proclaimed to the visiting party her knowledge of Irish. Now, she ventured to address the lady in that tongue. After a pause, the other returned negligent greeting, her glance wandering over Nora's face and costume, but ever centering on the flowers. She

asked them if this was a place whose name they had never heard; they made a joint effort to answer, and interest began to flicker through the jaded courtesy of her manner. At a sign the charioteer went on. She paced forward between them, her robe whispering over the grass, speaking slowly in the tongue the men of to-day are patiently wooing back to its throne, and they were content to yield themselves in simple delight to the voice of her, like golden cymbals chiming beneath a laughing stream. But every name she mentioned was unknown to them or beyond the range of their scanty lore. They could gather, however, that she came by the Esker Riath from Bealach-Chonglais, and her laughter made the air melodious when Con was unable to tell who was Ard Righ now!

As if to reassure himself the man looked round, and stood, held by overwhelming surprise. The bluff of Frankfield was still jutting forth on the left, bold over the rolling valley, its height crowned by myriad foliage, revealing here and there the snowy walls of rounded buildings. On the bossed hillside, ringed now by firs, another dwelling shone, around it browsing flocks. The country, still familiar, spread onward to old Lehena in the sinking sun, but new-set by groves and beautiful with unknown bloom of snowy blossoms surging upon the flanks of forest spurs—fragments of splendid mystery. Amid the sheen of waving corn the valley smiled, beaded by many a white-walled home, and from its pleasant folds trilled the tinkle of young girls' laughter and resonant chords of

harmony. The place seem to be very populous,; he wondered how the Government allowed it! And, people did not shut the doors to laugh!

Nora was going on beside the stately woman. "Then thou didst not gather them for a charm?" she was saying, as she nodded towards the lusmore bells.

"No, they are only a little present," replied the girl, hoping vaguely she would not be asked for them.

"Then they are thine to give, and I should be grateful."

"They are only common things," replied Nora, her grasp tightening, "you might gather better on any ditch-side in half an hour."

"The time is not mine," whispered the woman, leaning towards her. As their shoulders touched, the girl had a sensation of sunlight and foam. An exquisite fragrance fell around her. One of the hounds turned and looked back with a growl, his red eyes gleaming. The edge of fear chilled Nora; she shrank back. "Be quiet, sir," she said in English. "I never saw such a big dog!"

"What is that tongue thou speakest," said the lady as they went on, "It is full of mean little words?"

"Beurla," replied Nora. "The tongue of the Sassénacht."

"Who are they—of Greece or of Armonica?"

Nora tried to explain who and what they were. The Irish language is not rich enough in the necessary words, but imperfect as the attempt was, the

woman seemed to understand. "Then why does the Ard Righ permit such carrion!" she exclaimed.

"There is no Ard Righ. They sit in his chair."

"What!" Never before had Nora understood how a beautiful face could also be terrible. In her own heart smouldering hate was reviving, a wicked hate not completely exorcised by the slave-virtues she had been assiduously taught. It burnt against the justest people who ever allowed God to rule in Heaven. They went forward in silence, the woman with bent brows.

"But they are brave," she recommenced after a pause, "they must be brave, these strangers! Answer me, art thou afraid to name their name?"

"They are brave—amossa?" said Nora, remembering a cousin who sighted a rifle under Botha, "when they are ten to one, and can get the Gael to fight for 'em!"

"Yet they hold Eire, and the Gael fights for them!"

The girl shrank under the lash of the laugh that followed. The woman shook herself so that her trinkets rattled, and stamped her little foot. Then she leaned towards Nora. "Tell me, a cailin," she whispered "do the women of Eire bear men now, or do they seek lovers among the cunnini?" And Nora Finn understood that men might think death better than that low, sweet voice.

"Don't blame the men, they are disarmed," she said, brokenly. "If you have any pity in your heart, do not talk about those things!"

The woman looked at her quietly, the eyes travelling from the motor cap to the Nottingham boots, scorching away every atom of squalid finery, the badge of her serfdom, and clothing the nakedness of her soul with a veil of shame, that yet had the grace of a generous sorrow. "Why dost thou attire thyself so?" she asked, gently.

"It is the fashion," stammered Nora.

"The fashion of Eire—those sad hues?"

Nora's cheek was the hue of the lusmore bell.

"Do they force thee to dress thus? No! Then why, if thou dost not love them, art thou led by the chain of their fashion, as men lead apes? Fie! By thy showing, they are sullen and dull, yet, thou, a woman of Eire, must run still by their side, looking into their faces like a dog, and, like a dog, snatching at what they drop!" She spoke very gently, but it was only by lowering her lids that Nora could escape her eyes.

In imagination, she saw herself tearing the stylish ten-and-sixpenny "suit" that stunk of the sweater's den till the Irish air purified its foulness, tearing it from placket to hem, and back again from hem to waist-band—it would be foolish, but it was by such folly people won back their souls! She saw herself going to Mass a couple of Sundays with her mother's woollen shawl about her shapely shoulders. Well, no matter whatever came or went, she was a woman of Ireland, and only with fabric spun by Irish hands would she clothe the beauty God had given her, and had denied to what

bore the sons of the stranger! She began to weep.

The other laughed kindly, and coming nearer pinched her cheek. "Let us forget sad things," she said. "Is not this Eire? Look around. I see no Sassénacht here!"

They had climbed the hill slope and were descending northward through a wide space bordered by great oaks. Nora, as in a dream, recognised the lie of the ground sloping down to form the dimple that holds the Lough. But the lake had disappeared into an open space astir with the life of a city and tiered by houses tiled, reed-roofed, dazzingly white, or silvery with the satiny sheen of hazel-ribbed sides, multi-coloured with bloom-weighted foliage of the flowers that to-day smile into the weak faces of another generation without the loss of one of the tints which once made Cesair wind them in her tresses. But in the centre of the place outlined by dark foliage, a giant fountain sent up fitful jets of crystal that flashed and fell in snowy foam, their wavering shadows traced by brilliant sunshine.

"Mother of God! where does the light come from?" murmured the girl.

"Shall I show you?" said the lady, softly. She assumed another manner, gracious with the playfulness of an affectionate sister. Passing one great arm about the young girl's neck, she caught her ear-lobe, and, at the touch, every little detail Nora had ever heard or read of the land that bore her leaped to memory. "Since thou wilt not give me

those poor herbs," continued the lady, "wilt thou not at least come with me. By Lir I swear, and by the elements of which we are compacted, thou shalt know neither pain nor ache nor sorrow for kindred and friends, nor they sorrow for thee. Music and song and dance and ever-blooming youth will be thine—and men for whom queens have died thy companions!"

Through the golden mesh-work of the words Nora Finn saw the land of which she spoke, and knew it to be Tir-na-nOge. Instinctively, she glanced in the direction of the little half-spire of the new church, and saw instead the tapering shaft of a stately tower. The longing to elude the present which appeals to our race drew her to the chariot. It meant escape from a world modelled as far as might be on the life of a British factory, escape from a country saturated with misery, from a callous generation melting away through a million tavern doors, escape to the heaven of her dreams, guided by this glorious woman whose very presence thrilled with the pride and courage of an unconquered past.

"Oh, for God's sake, is it alive or dead I am?" she cried.

"Neither," replied the lady.

"Then what is the meaning of it? Where are the people?" she gasped. Their actual non-existence for all the purposes of Lady Prye's world did not strike her. She wondered where Micky-O and his sisters were, and to what regions Billy Duggan, the cobbler, and the woman who sold lon-

sticks at the corner had journeyed on their departure from the stage they had not graced. She thought of her parents—squalid humour peeping through the splendour of the moment. Would her father be angry when he found the hat, like the harp he dreamt of, crownless. Wouldn't it be awful if he gave away the topper without taking it out of the band-box? Billy Duggan might resent it as a practical joke, and they all might be shamed in the police court!

The thoughts vanished in the glow of the temptation. The instinct of trust that has outlived two thousand years woke. "Will I be as I ought to be, over there?" she asked, timidly, speaking the secret of her sisters.

"Yes," replied the woman, simply. "Thou wilt be a lady of the Gael. Ah, deelish, it is hard living amongst slaves. Come!"

Nora Finn put her foot on the chariot step. One of the great dogs thrust his muzzle against the flowers, the other wheeled round and sniffed upwards; a distant yelping cry came to her ears. Another foot rang sharply beside her. Con MacCarthy, panting, stood at her shoulder.

"Where are you going, Nora?" he said. "Glory be to God, it isn't natural at all. Look! Everything is gone, there's only you and I. Don't go away!"

In a flash, Nora was at his side. A shadow fell upon the queenly face, the woman sighed. "Are you brother and sister?" she asked, wearily.

"No," said Nora.

"Then lovers?" There was eagerness in the tone. Nora was silent; she waited for Con to speak. She saw he was comparing her with this lady of old days. A terrible thought sent the blood from her heart. Perhaps he was ashamed of her!

"Wilt thou come with me?" The loveliest face Con MacCarthy had ever seen was pleading to him, snowy arms outstretched. He took a step forward, but Nora clung to him madly.

"Oh, Con, a gradh, don't go!" she sobbed. "For God's sake, for the sake of your weeny, weeny Nora, that knew you always!"

There was unmistakable human laughter in the eyes wistfully watching them, and such a laugh as Irish ears but rarely hear bubbled from the lady's red lips. It was drowned by insistent baying. The dogs circled round the chariot, growling in reply. The place was full of rushing wolf forms that as suddenly thinned and circled back before the teeth of the gallant hounds.

"Come into the chariot, lady," cried the charioteer, with a heart-rending sigh. "These are no true Gaels, but strangers indeed of brain-wit. Come, lest thy side again be rent!"

The woman's face was grey now, and she lifted an arm to hide the disfigurement of grief. Her shoulders rose and fell, and over her was the dignity of an immeasurable loss, the pathos of a little child.

With a howl the wolves charged, to be beaten back by the guarding dogs, cheered on by the man

as the horses rose, pawing. Con snatched at Nora, She dropped the flowers. Swift as lightning a wolf, horrid of tooth and eye, broke through, and, as the woman snatched at the blooms, put his foot upon them, snarling upward, his mouth a double saw of glistening teeth. She shrank back, shrieking—"The flowers—the flowers of fate! Oh, man of Eire, take them from him!"

"Into the car, O love of my heart!" cried the man, his scabbard clanging as the blade flamed out. "I cannot hold the steeds, nor the dogs hold the wolves. The time is almost gone!"

The woman's hands flew to her temples. "Take them from him," she cried; "we dare not tell you why!"

"Oh, Con," screamed Nora, "they want the flowers for something. She asked me for them, but I didn't like to give them, because I was afraid of her, and as you gathered them some mischief might come to you. Oh, take them from the brute!"

Her words were drowned in the yelp and roar of an unequal fight, from which they were as remote as if in another world; the two hounds, driven back on the lady, fought madly to save her from the cruel jaws threatening on every side; the charioteer now shouted encouragement, now hacked at the beasts darting and leaping round the plunging steeds.

Con MacCarthy did not stop to speculate on the waywardness of women. He sprang at the flowers and wrenched them from under the sharp talons. For an instant he felt the bristling impact of shaggy

fur—a blast of burning breath. The herbs were twitched from his hand by the lady who had fallen on her knees. There was a yelp of baffled rage, a cry of exultation, deep gallant baying of victorious hounds, and, above all, the triumphant neighing of the white steeds. The wolves had vanished.

The woman bent her head above the flowers, but, arresting herself, leaned upward and thrust them against the man's face ere she put them to her own, and every particle of æther reverberated to a tinkling chime.

Both laughed and pointed to the place where now the Lough reflects the sailing clouds of day and myriad stars of night. Up beside the fountain a chariot dashed furiously, from it a woman leaped, arrow-like, one arm uplifted, the hand grasping a mass of flowers, where Nora could distinguish the bloom of the lusmore, and a faint voice chanted for a moment A distant rumble broke from earth to sky, and from the crystal fountain surged a turbid stream that spread and widened as the woman leaped back under the arch of the driver's sinewy arm and naked sword, and soon amid the billows a crowd struggled fiercely in flashing pursuit, and as the chariot came, blazing red against the grey vapour eddying from the fountain, white walls, gay roofs and flaming bronze slipped headlong to ruin, and over all crept still the growing silver of the spreading lake

But now a murky coil swept snake-like across the scene, and, hurling its long curve aloft and afar,

fell over the rocking car, so that it, the white steeds, and those they bore, were taken from the watchers' eyes as they recognised them. Swiftly it globed to darkness; out of the darkness sprang a flaming figure, such as antique fancy has pictured Tisiphone, and loud a strident voice proclaimed:—"Stay, sorceress of the Tuatha de Dannan, and hear thy sentence. For this deed of thy ambition thou shalt wander with him whom thy arts have saved from justice through the outer world. Immortal, from the gold of thy head to the dust on thy shoe, and this chariot and its steeds, yea, to the smallest buckle on their harness, and never shall ye stay amid the shadows of the outer space, for the wolves of Justice shall be ever on your traces, and your sole guard the courage of his dogs and the swiftness of thy steeds. Thus shall ye continue for two thousand buddings of those flowers, when thou mayest return on the track of thy chariot wheels for one half hour, and ye shall find a man and woman of the Gael, lovers, on the point of quarrel and bitter separation, the woman bearing such blooms as thou hast gathered to ruin this town—the lusmore, the woodbine, and the fern of invisibility. If the girl refuse the flowers, woo her to the land of eternal youth, still bearing them; but if the man will not allow her to depart—nor yet, she, the man, then thou shalt have hope thy release is at hand—but the flowers must be given. And when ye two have inhaled their odour the spell will be broken, for inhaling it ye shall win back the dower of mortality, forgetfulness in death."

Then the voice died, and the cloud wavered into grey mist. Nora looked aside and uttered a cry, the beautiful woman had sunk down beside the chariot, and a white-haired man, pitifully weak, was striving to draw her within. The exquisite robe, crinkled into a thousand wrinkles, trailed in the dust, so that Nora heedfully gathered it up. The steeds shook their harness, neighing, impatient; the great hounds bayed joyously.

"They long to smell the salt breeze by Dundealgan, ere peace be given to them," said the lady. "Hark, how they whinney to Bran and Fodla." And she caressed the rough brave head of one of the fawning dogs.

"Long have they borne us, and well have those defended us," replied the man. "It is but meet! It hath been a long wooing, my queen; but to-night we sleep at last."

Those who have seen an old woman's face lit by joy, and thought it lovelier than hue of apple-blossom on cheek of ivory, will think as Nora and Con thought, heedfully lifting within the chariot the poor handful of bones into which the sumptuous beauty of two minutes past had faded "She's dying!" sobbed Nora. "Oh, is there anything on your mind?"

She spoke in a tongue which had no meaning for that smiling face, but the tears in the kind Irish eyes needed no interpreter. The lady laughed, soft as a silver bell that tinkles deep amid shadowy aisles, then she beckoned Nora. The girl bent forward, seeking some trace of the red mouth that,

mayhap, sent hosts to battle. Smiling still, the lady smote the weeping girl with the herbs of power on eyes and bosom and side. "This be thy dower," she said, "beauty be on thee—the beauty of the women of Eire, who never knew the bondage of the tongue of Mean Words. Have ye not ours—but, mayhap, permission must be craved of the stranger?"

"Oh, they will allow us to speak it now," said Con, his arm round the wasted form.

"Allow ye!" The voice was too weak for anger. She took his strong hand and laid it against her cheek. "I am glad I am going home," she murmured.

"Mother of God! She's dying without a prayer or anything!" cried Nora. She glanced over her shoulder, and sped away into the mist, pausing only when she was ankle-deep in water. She gathered some in the chalice of the perfect hands that are the heritage of her race, but it slipped through. She tore off the cap, and filling it, hurried back, running as an Irishwoman does to do a service

There was only the lonely figure of Con upon the road, now white and deserted as before. "She's gone," he said, simply, and brushed a hand across his eyes. Nora stood speechless, then she burst into tears. He caught her to him. The motor cap came between them. With a careless jerk he sent it whirling over the hedge. She nestled to him; he smoothed the little head and its luxuriant tresses. Then he held her at arms' length

and looked into the face the new soul was lighting. "Nora," he said, gravely, "you are after coming into your legacy."

They went on. The great shield of the Lough was purple now, shot by glistening ripples of starry gold, the descending dusk draped and shadowed kindly the new little terraces and the old little houses below the church. A light was in the window of one, it winked at the lovers, for a child's form crossed it, and the wink was reflected by laughing multiplications in a bight of the Lough. John Delay's dog, Bowler, was abusing Jemmy Donovan's three belated geese, as they waddled anxiously across the track of Batt Kennedy's milk-cart thundering along the Lough road Batt was singing in the beurla. "England an' Ireland will be frinds yet ye'll find!" howled Batt, as he belted the mule.

Con laughed bitterly, not knowing that the song had motive other than the joy of expression—the vicinity of the police barrack, and the fact that the sergeant had asked for a sample that same morning may have been contributing causes.

"We won't mind talking about what happened," said Con, softly. "They are gone home now, and let them rest."

Nora, drying her eyes, pressed close to him in ratification. All around, walls, hedges, houses, dimmered into shape, and stood steady with the serenity of what had been and will be. There was nothing to say a queen had passed.

Presently a string of little children came down

the Togher road, behind, hand in hand, crooning in undertones a song the western breeze had brought them from Gougane Barra. One of them, a little girl, looked up and recognised Nora. "O Eire, milis uasal!" she sang, and then exclaimed, "Oh, Nora, where's your hat?"

"The wind blew it off," said Nora, patting the curly head.

"What wind, eroo?"

"A wind that is blowing about Ireland" replied the girl. The little one leaned to her and looked up in her face. "Oh, Nora, what happened to you?" she cried. "How lovely you are!"

Nora caught her in her arms and kissed her. "Say it in Irish, avourneen," she whispered. And the little thing did, creditably.

Con and Nora laughed with different intonation as she set down the child who had said what Cork was saying many a day after. The mite grasped, with chubby fist, a back breadth of Nora's dress, and the laughing children before them, the lovers went home as the moon came out and wove a golden ladder on the Lough for dreams to come by.

SHAMROCKS.

A GUST of March wind whirled through the suddenly-opened door, found the red heart of the smouldering fire, warmed itself there a blazing moment, and sprang away up the wide chimney to liberty once more. Puisin leaped from the hob, her tail a note of furious interrogation. The two children, who had been cuddled on the broad hearth, sprang into dancing activity, and rushed to greet the newcomer, a tall, grizzled man, as he came laughing towards them.

"God save all here," he cried: "phew, but it's blowing sharp outside! So ye're keeping house? Where's the mother an' the sisters, Mag?"

"At Mass, Uncle Michael," replied the elder. "Myself and Nora were tellin' stories, an' Puisin here pretending not to be listening, though if you saw the way her clousheens were goin', you'd know she was taking it all in—warn't you, Puisin?" But Puisin, now frantically struggling in the chubby arms of a maiden of seven, some four years younger than Maggie, answered only by acrid invective.

Michael O'Byrne, having sat down by the fire, gave the wheel controlling the draught a few turns, and against a background of golden sparks two

lithe little flames commenced a noiseless jig above the fragrant turf. The children gathered to him with the gentle hospitality that was part of their nature, and Nora held up the tabby so that he might kiss her, too, the sorely-tried creature dexterously clawing at his nose in hopes of vicarious vengeance.

"Now, Nora, agradh, keep quiet," said her uncle, declining the tigerish caress, and feeling in his waistcoat pocket. "Oh, dear, dear, how does your mother manage at all! Here, give me the Puisin, I'm afraid 'tis the life of a boy's goat she has between ye. There now! Well, an' can you tell me the day that's in it?"

"Patrick's Day," responded Nora, promptly.

"Very well, an' where's the bunch of shamrocks ye were to have for me?"

One of the joyous faces dimpled into sudden gravity. "Oh, I forgot," said Maggie.

"I didn't," cried Nora, clapping her hands and sidling close.

"Good girl, Noney! An' where did you get 'em, love?"

"Where you always told us to look for them, at the corner of the bawn field, under the ash tree."

"That's right girleen. Oh, Maggie, an' you my god-daughter—why did you let your sister beat you out?"

Maggie shrugged a rounded shoulder. "Sure last year, when I got the penny, I asked why you always made us look there, you said it was an old story you'd tell us some day, but you never did, an' my mother said we warn't to ask you."

He laughed, and produced two bright half-pennies. "So that is the reason you didn't get the penny this year instead of Nora?" he asked, smiling still.

"I'd rather have the story," said Maggie.

"You are as much a woman as you will ever be," replied the man, taking the little shamrock-filled bowl Nora gravely handed to him, "but since it is your wish, you'll have the story, a chuisle."

Maggie nestled beside him and put up her red mouth with the royalty of childhood.

"Once upon a time, before this house was built," he began, carefully choosing and arranging some bunches of the trefoil, "there was a young man living in this part of the country, and he had a great gradh for a young woman who lived not a stone's throw from where we are sitting——"

"Is it the Sullivans?" asked the literal Nora, rubbing one of the coins on the edge of her pinafore.

"'Tis, then, just—the Sullivans—only they warn't living there, then. She was a strong farmer's daughter, an' he a poor fellow with nothing in the world but a few acres of bog, an' the mother an' sister at home. He was fond of the girl, the earth under her, an' the sky over her, but he knew that love, though it can do great things, never yet was able to boil a pot, so he had to be content with 'God save you' an' 'God save you kindly,' every time they'd meet, and he had to listen to the neighbours talkin' of the grand matches she might be havin'. Well, the time passed, an'

she didn't change her name—'twas Maggie, too, by the same token—and he worked away, might an' main, at the farm, hopin' that God would put something in his way before it would be too late to speak up to the father. Oh, wisha, many an' many is the time he'd go out from the mother an' sister when the stars were over the Paps, an' sit down under a little tree at the corner of a field to have a look at the roof over her, an' the light she was sitting by, until the poor mother would call to the darkness: 'Hey, Micky, come into your tea, they're no good when they're cold!' If I told you half the things the poor fellow used to do 'twould be enough to make Puisin here laugh, let alone your two selves! After a bit, what comes to all came to her; the father died an' the family began to get poor. The man I'm tellin' you of would have given his life for 'em, but his life wasn't worth much, so he had to be content to look on, an' lookin' on is the hardest part of the game sometimes. At the heel of the hunt it was the way she had to go to America to do something to pay the rent, for she refused many offers, an' the pride, or maybe something else, wouldn't allow her to go back of her 'No.' The day she went was just after Christmas; the snow was heavy on the ground, and the whole country was white an' silent under the silver of it, so that it was like another world altogether. The young man an' the sister were comin' home from Mass—'twas New Year's Day—an' they stepped in to wish her God speed. Some neighbours were there, too, to keep up their spirits, for

they were of good blood, an' could laugh in the face of misfortune. But it was the young man put herself an' the mother up on the car, an' spread the rug over *her* knees. There she was, sittin' up, smiling, an' the mother at the other side, trying to smile, too, an' Kitty, the youngest sister, at the window, throwing a snow-ball at Jur, God rest him! holding the horse's head—Molly, they used call her. An' when the young man saw her there, it came to him to speak out an' take her down off the car, an' carry her away with him to some country that would be like *Tir-na-nOge*, where there would be singing an' music always. I suppose it was the white of the snow an' the change it made in everything put the thought into his head, but he remembered the old mother at home an' the sister at his side. So he only wished her good-bye like the rest."

"How did he know if she'd have him?" commented Maggie.

"He thought of that, too," replied Michael O'Byrne, gravely.

"What happened then?" asked Nora.

"She went out by the gate, up the white road, an' away to America."

"What did the young man do?" demanded Maggie, thoughtfully, pulling Puisin's tail.

"He went home with his sister, an' from that out everything prospered with him. After some years his sister married a decent man who gave her a good life, an' she gave him a son and four daughters—the finest girls in the barony! But it

was all the other way with the girl's family—they were sold out an' went to the four winds of heaven. Sometimes he used to hear of herself, now in this place, now in that; now going up country, now going down country—an' the last he heard was that she wasn't very strong, and in service. She that was reared with a board to her foot an' a clock to her ear! Bimeby, when the man's own mother was dying she called him an' spoke of what he thought nobody but God an' himself knew, an' she told him to write for the girl an' bring her home an' marry her. That was five years after she went. The snow was again on the ground, and everything just as if five summers never came between, and as if no strangers lived in the house where she saw light first. He was well off then. It took some time to find where she lived, because America is a big place, but he found her, through a priest, one Father Roche, it was Charlestown, Carolina. So he wrote, telling her at last of his love for her, an' why he couldn't speak out before, an' asking her in the name of his mother to come back to him an' the old spot, for there was nothing he wanted in the world outside her own four bones. You may be sure he sent plenty of passage-money. After a bit he got an answer sayin' that she would start in a little time, a week or two, an' that she was getting stronger an' would be all right once she touched the old sod. The day he got the letter it was coming on to the end of February, as bad as ever came since, an' it's a good bit now, but that letter turned the time to summer for him. He

went out into the field where he used watch o' nights the light at her window, an' dug some shamrocks an' sent them off by next post to Charlestown to wear against St. Patrick's Day, if it should find her on the sea, an' to put in her bosom when she'd come ashore at Cove for love of him, because she didn't say anything in her answer about what he wanted to know most, being always a shy girl. People didn't travel very quickly from America those days, but you may be sure he found out when the vessel she was coming by would be due, and you may be sure he was down at Cove, fresh an' fastin' in the early morning—it was St. Patrick's Day, too."

He paused. Through the deep embrasured window the head of Mangerton looked in, dark beneath the grey sky, and crossed by the quivering boughs of a young ash, vibrating under the wind of March. Puisin cuddled herself on his knee, her purring dying down with the slackened stroking of his hand, her yellow eyes fixed upon the golden fire-pictures glowing like red temple columns in old Bubastis. Maggie put her head against his shoulder, Nora fitted a half-penny into an eye-socket, and regarded him critically. "Did the girl come?" she demanded.

"Yes, a chuisle," replied the man, dreamily, "she came down the gangway of the tender. She had the shamrocks in her bosom and the light of love on her face. She came down the gangway—it's the truth I'm telling—an' put her hand in the man's. There was a great gathering of people on

the quay, an' great confusion, an', as he was looking about for an easy passage out of the press, who should he see but Father Roche coming down out of the ship. The first thing he said was: 'Mick, my boy, I'm sorry for you,' because he knew the man, being from his part of the country. 'For what?' says the man. 'For your trouble,' he says. 'Sorra a bit of trouble came next or near me, but the joy of my life, this blessed day!' says my poor Mick. The priest looked at him. 'I was with her at the last,' he says, 'the shamrocks and your letter were put into the coffin with her. She told me to tell you that when I should see you in Ireland. She was not at all strong, and the fever is quick out there.' 'It must be the way you are making a mistake,' says the man, 'she's here herself, sound, an' heartier than ever she was.' An' he looked round to the side where he put her, when, lo an' behold you! there was nothing at all at all, only the sun on the water an' the people coming out of the ship, just as if nothing had happened."

"Was she a ghost, aru?" asked Nora.

"I don't know," answered Michael O'Byrne, "I only know she's sleeping quiet this minute in the city of Charlestown, in the State of Carolina, in the land of America."

"I know who she was," cried Maggie, straightening herself, and putting back the yellow hair to look up into the dark eyes that couldn't see her distinctly then, "It was Maggie Ny Carroll who went to America. We say a decade for her every night."

He caught the yellow head between his hands and kissed it.

"An' who was the man at all?" asked Nora, polishing the image and superscription of the halfpenny Cæsar.

Maggie released herself and looked at her sister, the intuition of the keenest and kindest race on God's earth, the heritage of a glorious past, suddenly asserting itself.

"An' that's all, Uncle Michael?" demanded the younger, vaguely abashed.

"Oh! no, a gradh," replied Michael O'Byrne, rising, "it's to be continued."

A rattle of wheels, a tumult of laughing voices warmed the wind of March. The children sprang to open the door; the man put the shamrocks in his hat-brim and went out to greet his sister.

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